

# Agenda

## Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Wednesday, 21 September 2022, 10.00 am**  
**County Hall, Worcester**

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Scrutiny on telephone number 01905 844965 or by emailing [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:  
**'Disclosable pecuniary interests'** and **'other disclosable interests'**

### WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

**NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you**

### WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
  - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

**NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI**

### WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
  - You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

### WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

### DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** **OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

### DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
  - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

## Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Wednesday, 21 September 2022, 10.00 am, Council Chamber

### Membership

#### Councillors:

Cllr Emma Stokes (Chairman), Cllr James Stanley (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Laura Gretton, Cllr Peter Griffiths, Cllr Emma Marshall, Cllr Natalie McVey and Cllr Craig Warhurst

### Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	<b>Apologies and Welcome</b>	
2	<b>Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip</b>	
3	<b>Public Participation</b> <i>Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case Tuesday 20 September 2022). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed in this agenda and on the website.</i>	
4	<b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> Previously circulated	
5	<b>Update on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Services</b> (Indicative timing 10:00 – 10:50am)	1 - 8
6	<b>Performance and 2022/23 In-Year Budget Monitoring</b> (Indicative timing 10:50 – 11:20am)	9 - 30
7	<b>Performance Monitoring of Comments, Compliments and Complaints</b> (Indicative timing 11:20 – 12:10pm)	31 - 56
8	<b>Work Programme</b>	57 - 62

Agenda produced and published by the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Emma James/Jo Weston 01905 844965, email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the [Council's Website](#)

Date of Issue: Monday, 12 September 2022

Item No	Subject	Page No
	(Indicative timing 12:10 – 12:15pm)	

## NOTES

### Webcasting

Members of the Panel are reminded that meetings of the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website

## **CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **UPDATE ON GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER SERVICES**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Panel has requested an update on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller services.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities, the Assistant Director for Communities and the Service Manager for Countryside Centres, Green Space, Gypsy Services and Road Safety have been invited to the meeting.

#### **Background**

3. This report has been requested from the Panel as part of its agreed work programme. It provides contextual information into the culture of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers along with the detail on the services and functions provided by or on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

#### **Culture and Ethnicity – definitions, terminology and statistics**

4. There are several different groups of Gypsies and travellers including: Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy Travellers, Travelling Show people and New Travellers. Each have different histories and traditions:
  - Gypsies are Romany ethnic groups who have lived in Britain for around 600 years. Their ancestors originate from northern India.
  - Irish Travellers are a nomadic group with a distinctive way of life who have been part of Irish and British society since ancient times but increased since the 1960s.
  - New Travellers are people of settled background who adopted a travelling lifestyle more recently, although some are now in their third or fourth generation of travelling. They have adopted this way of life for a variety of reasons, such as homelessness, unemployment or environmental issues
  - ‘Gorgers’ is the term that Gypsies and Travellers use to describe non travellers.
5. Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as an ethnic group under the Race Relations Act (2000) and Equalities Act (2010). The population of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales is 58,000 (2011 census). 75% live in bricks and mortar accommodation, many of whom do so reluctantly, whilst 25% live in caravans/mobile structures on traveller sites, either permanently or semi-permanently. Only a small proportion of Gypsies and Travellers are truly nomadic (1000 caravans nationally).

6. More information on education, employment, housing and health of Gypsies and Travellers is available at the following link: [Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller ethnicity summary - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk)

7. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to treat someone less favourably because of a range of protected characteristics, including race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. A nomadic lifestyle is lawful; it is a culture that is recognised and protected through legislation, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected under this Act. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the police and all public authorities. The Act places a duty on all authorities to have due regard to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Service Team**

8. Worcestershire County Council employs a small Gypsy and Traveller Service Team which consists of 2.6 FTEs (3 staff) plus 1/3 Countryside Greenspace, Gypsy Service and Road Safety Education Manager's time. The majority of the team's time is spent managing the County Council's seven residential traveller sites and dealing with unauthorised encampments on County Council land. The Team does not get involved in planning applications for Traveller sites or unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller development matters, those falling to the local planning authorities i.e., Districts.

9. The Gypsy and Traveller Service Team has a budget of £509,382 per annum, including recharges. It does not have a base budget from the County Council, instead raising its revenue from site income (rents and water payments), so that the service is 100% self-financing.

10. The County Council owns and manages seven residential traveller sites in Worcestershire as follows:

- Hipton Hill, Evesham – 24 plots
- Hinton on the Green, Evesham – 5 plots
- Pinvin – 19 plots
- Smite, Worcester – 18 plots
- Waterside Park, Worcester – 17 plots
- Lower Heath, Stourport – 22 plots
- Malvern Meadows, Malvern – 5 plots

11. The Traveller Sites provide accommodation for 110 families in Worcestershire on a social housing basis, with reasonable rents and sites that are maintained to a good standard. Providing well-designed and managed sites for Gypsies and Travellers supports happy and healthy communities and addresses wider determinants of health, education and employment.

12. Each family plot is made up of a utility block (shower/bathroom, kitchen and, in some cases, a dining area) within an area of hardstanding surrounded by a boundary fence. These are all maintained by the County Council. Families then provide their own sleeping/living accommodation on the plot, via touring caravan,

static caravan or park home, which is their responsibility in terms of maintenance and health and safety.

13. Tenancy agreements fall under the Mobile Homes Act legislation where residents have a signed agreement with the County Council. Residents pay a weekly rent of £76.50 for a single plot and £110.10 for a double plot, as well as a weekly water charge of £11.50. Many residents are on either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. Rent payments are paid to the County Council direct through Housing Benefit, but because Universal Credit do not recognise Council Councils as social landlords, Universal Credit payments can only be paid direct to the County Council if this is specifically requested, otherwise residents pay their rent payments once they have received their benefits. This does cause challenges with arrears building up over time.

14. There are a number of residents with long standing arrears which have built up due to delays in them receiving their benefits (particularly Universal Credit) or through direct non-payment of water or rent. An arrears management process has been developed in recent years, with support from Finance and Legal teams. An arrangement with Warwickshire County Council Legal Services is now being trialled to deal with the most serious arrears, ultimately concluding with potential termination of Mobile Home Act agreements if payment plans cannot be adhered to. Residents are signposted to Citizen's Advice for debt or budget planning support.

15. The Gypsy and Traveller Service Team operates a waiting list for families who would like to reside on a County Council site. There are currently nearly 50 families on the waiting list, due to a shortage of plots. Plots are allocated using a priority points system for certain criteria, similar to that used by Housing Teams with District Councils. Some examples of these criteria include local connection to Worcestershire, with children, children educated locally, proven medical need, registered disabled, elderly relatives, homeless, vulnerability and payment history. Points can also be deducted as a result of previous anti-social behaviour, neighbour harassment, unpaid arrears and previous abandonment of plot/other housing. The waiting list is updated annually.

## **Planning Requirement for the Provision of Traveller Sites**

16. There is a national shortage of traveller sites, which contributes significantly to the number of unauthorised encampments. District Councils have a statutory responsibility to ensure there is adequate provision of permanent traveller sites via their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA) and their Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Documents that sit within their Local Plans.

17. The definition of Gypsies and Travellers in the planning system was changed in 2015 so that it no longer includes those who have ceased travelling permanently for any reason, including old age or disability. This has meant that the approach to Gypsy and Traveller planning policies is inconsistent across local planning authorities and the requirement for traveller site pitches has been artificially reduced, further exacerbating the lack of recognised traveller sites across the UK.

## Unauthorised Encampments

18. The County Council deals with 40+ encampments per year on WCC land such as Highway, school grounds, car parks, countryside sites e.g. country parks and picnic places.

19. The County Council developed the Joint Protocol for the Management of Unauthorised Encampments of Gypsies and Travellers on Local Authority Land in Worcestershire around 25 years ago. The Protocol involves all seven local authorities and West Mercia Police and identifies roles and responsibilities for dealing with encampments on local authority land. It does not consider encampments on private land. The Joint Protocol is reviewed every few years by a group of Legal and Enforcement officers from each of the seven local authority.

20. Once an encampment is identified on County Council land, Gypsy and Traveller Service officers will visit the encampment on behalf of the client department (e.g. Property, School, Countryside) to clarify the intentions of trespassers, advise of any vacancies on legitimate sites, complete a welfare check and signpost to relevant agencies such as health, dentist, education, housing. If welfare issues are identified, the client department may have to consider deferring enforcement action. If enforcement action is deemed necessary, the encampment is served with a written notice to leave. If the trespassers fail to meet the deadline, formal legal proceedings will be started.

21. Typically the County Council will take immediate enforcement action if one or more of the relevant criteria are being met:

- level of nuisance is occurring which cannot be effectively controlled.
- Demonstrable requirement of land for operational use.
- Environmental damage.
- Criminality demonstrably linked to the encampment, usually determined by the police.

22. If the relevant criteria are not met, then the client department may consider deferring enforcement action for a period of time (up to 21 days).

23. If a decision is taken by the client department, a legal process under either Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 or Part 55 of the Civil Procedure Rules is started, both of which will ultimately involve bailiffs if the encampment does not move on.

24. New police powers for managing unauthorized encampments have recently been introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (Section 60C Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (CJPOA)). Offences now apply where:

- a person is aged 18 or over;
- a person is residing, or intending to reside, on land without the consent of the occupier of the land;
- a person has or intends to have at least one vehicle with them on the land;
- one or more conditions in subsection 60C(4) of the CJPOA are met including when a person has caused **OR** is likely to cause **significant** damage, disruption or distress.



25. West Mercia Police have defined 'significant' as:

- Communities not being to access facilities such as car parks, sports fields, parks etc.
- Damage to land eg agricultural
- Environmental damage
- Interference with water/energy supplies
- Impact on workers or customers
- Distress from offensive conduct

26. If a person commits significant damage, disruption or distress but leaves on request – no offence is committed, unless they return within the prohibited 12 month period (other offences may apply such as Criminal Damage or Public Order). If there is no significant damage, disruption or distress, then previous police powers under the amended section 61 criminal justice & public order act 1994 or section 62a criminal justice and public order 1994 can be used as follows:

- where **2 OR** more people – trespassing - on land (or on land that forms part of a highway, but only where other conditions are met);
- there is a **reasonable belief** by police they are trespassers and intend to reside there;
- reasonable steps have been taken by the occupier or on their behalf to ask them to leave; and
- property has been damaged or threatening or abusive words or behaviour have been shown towards the occupier or 6 or more vehicles are present

27. Section 62a can be used by police if the trespassers can be directed to an available transit or permanent site that has vacancies. This is rarely used as vacancies do not generally exist on traveller sites in Worcestershire.

28. The new police powers highlight the need to liaise with local authorities when assessing each individual case. West Mercia Police state that local authorities should be the lead agency in the initial stages of assessing the welfare of trespassers. This suggests a wider scope than has existed in Worcestershire under the current Joint Protocol as that only relates to local authorities leading where an encampment is on local authority land, rather than private land as well. The police are meeting with local authorities in September to further discuss how this will operate in reality and whether this creates a new duty for local authorities.

29. If there is no requirement of land for operational use, no unreasonable effect on neighbouring land and communities, no criminality, no environmental damage and no road safety hazards, enforcement of unauthorised encampments can be delayed for a period of up to 21 days. Due to the rural highway network that exists in Worcestershire, the County Council is relatively often able to allow an encampment to remain in place for a period of time. Ultimately this decision is for the client department, Highways, to take.

30. Negotiated Stopping is sometimes used by urban local authorities and pioneered in Leeds. Negotiated stopping involves local authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to a piece of land more suitable for all parties. The length of the agreement can also

vary from 2 weeks to several months but tends to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but often includes Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise and the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. This practice is not routinely used in Worcestershire.

31. Transit sites are permanent but are used short term by Gypsies and Travellers and have basic amenities and services, which include water supply, shared toilets, washing facilities/utility room, and waste disposal. Gypsies and Travellers can stay on these for a limited amount of time as they are only meant to be for short term stop-overs. There is a privately run transit site in Worcestershire, at Crossway Green near Hartlebury.

## **Joint Work with other Stakeholders**

### Suicide Prevention

32. The suicide rate amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities is higher than average, particularly amongst middle aged men. The Suicide Prevention Team, within Public Health, has done some joint work with the Gypsy and Traveller Service Team on raising awareness of mental health amongst our traveller site residents. A short film, 'Hold out a Hand' [Hold Out A Hand - YouTube](#) (created by Rural Media) was commissioned by Public Health to support this work.

### Covid Pandemic

33. Vaccination rates amongst the Traveller community are generally low. The Gypsy and Traveller Service Team has worked with Public Health to raise awareness of the importance of isolating during the peak of the pandemic and also the benefits of vaccination against the Covid virus.

### Resistance Bands

34. 'Living Well for Longer' is a Public Health initiative promoting positive and active ageing. The project is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of older people, bringing together the positive ageing work currently going on across the county and encouraging active and independent later lives. A major element of the project is the roll out of Resistance Bands Exercises programme. The Gypsy and Traveller Service Team is working with Public Health to get Resistance Bands distributed to the over 50s across the County Council's Traveller sites.

### Census 2021

35. Completion rates of the census by the Gypsy and Traveller community have in the past been low, resulting in an artificially low provision of data on Gypsy and Traveller demographics. The Census Team asked for support in promoting completion by Gypsy and Traveller communities of the Census in 2021

### Training for Social Workers across Adult Social Care and WCF

36. A bid for funding to the Social Work Teaching Partnership has been submitted to fund the development of online training for all social workers The key problem/need

to be addressed is the dearth of knowledge and practice guidance for social work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Recent research has recognised the disproportionate numbers of families having children removed and the consequent effect upon mental health. In order to work more empathically and sensitively with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures requires a core knowledge and value base which effectively challenges 'The Last Acceptable Form of Racism'. Once the e learning package is created it will become part of the core offer within adult and children's social work. The development of this training is dependent on the success of the funding bid.

### **Traveller Education Team**

37. The Gypsy Roma Traveller Education Team consists of a small team of 2 FTE (3 staff members) who work with the community, schools and partner agencies to encourage continued participation with education. Of these, one officer works with those families who are registered as being electively home educated. Officers visit both council and private sites, allocated by a geographical 'split'

38. We work across the county, offering support to all maintained schools and offer various traded support packages to our academies.

39. Work with our Gypsy Roma Traveller families is on a referral basis and we work closely alongside partner agencies to ensure support is offered in a joint way. Following the Covid pandemic, we have placed great emphasis on strengthening our relationships with our families and ensuring they feel included and supported when making decisions about their child's education.

40. The team underwent a whole service review in 2021, which aimed to ascertain exactly how best our support could be used. From this, 3 key priorities were identified:

- Improved Multi-agency working
- Training offer to schools and other agencies
- Focus on support at key transition points

41. These priorities underpin the work we do and allow us to ensure we are able to offer support which will benefit both the community and education providers across the county.

### **County Museum Gypsy Caravan Collection**

42. Worcestershire County Museum cares for an extremely rare collection of Gypsy caravans, or 'vardos' with each caravan having an extensive painted exterior and an equipped and decorated interior. The collection has national significance as the largest collection of Gypsy caravans on display in the country. It gives a rare insight into a history of our rural communities that is not widely shared.

43. For centuries the GRT community have been a significant part of rural life in our county, inextricably linked with the agricultural calendar and most significantly our fruit and hop farms where local settled and travelling communities would come together each harvest in the fields. The County Museum has been awarded a grant over 3 years to build networks of expertise both within and beyond our organisation,

enabling a legacy of archives and display of the vardo collection over future years. The GRT community is a primary research source and the project will visit sites to record documentary and oral histories.

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

44. The Panel is asked to:

- consider and comment on the information provided on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller services
- determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required
- agree any comments to forward to the Cabinet Member/s

## **Contact Points**

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer, in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

## **CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **PERFORMANCE AND 2022/23 IN-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Panel will be updated on performance and financial information for services relating to Commercial and Change, and Community Services.
2. The Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Communities and for Corporate Services and Communication, the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change, the Strategic Director for People, the Assistant Director for Communities and the Head of Finance have been invited to attend the meeting in order to respond to any queries from Panel Members.

#### **Performance Information**

3. Attached at Appendix 1 is a dashboard of performance information relating to Quarter 1 (April to June 2022). It covers the indicators from the Directorate and corporate level and other management information (as appropriate) which relate to services relevant to this Scrutiny Panel's remit.
4. The Scrutiny Panels consider this information on a quarterly basis and then report by exception to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board any suggestions for further scrutiny or areas of concern.

#### **Financial Information**

5. The Panel also receives in-year budget information. The information provided is for Period 4 and is attached in the form of presentation slides at Appendix 2 (to follow).

#### **Purpose of the Meeting**

6. Following discussion of the information provided, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to determine:
  - any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Members at the meeting and/or to Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board at its meeting on 29 September 2022
  - whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

#### **Supporting Information**

- Appendix 1 – Corporate and Communities Performance Information Dashboard  
Appendix 2 – Budget Monitoring Information for Period 4 2022/23 (to follow)

## Contact Points

Deborah Dale, Member Engagement Officer 01905 846282

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## Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agendas and minutes of the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13 July and 17 March 2022, 8 November, 24 September and 20 July 2021
- Agendas and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 20 July, 23 March 2022, 17 November, 30 September and 21 July 2021

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

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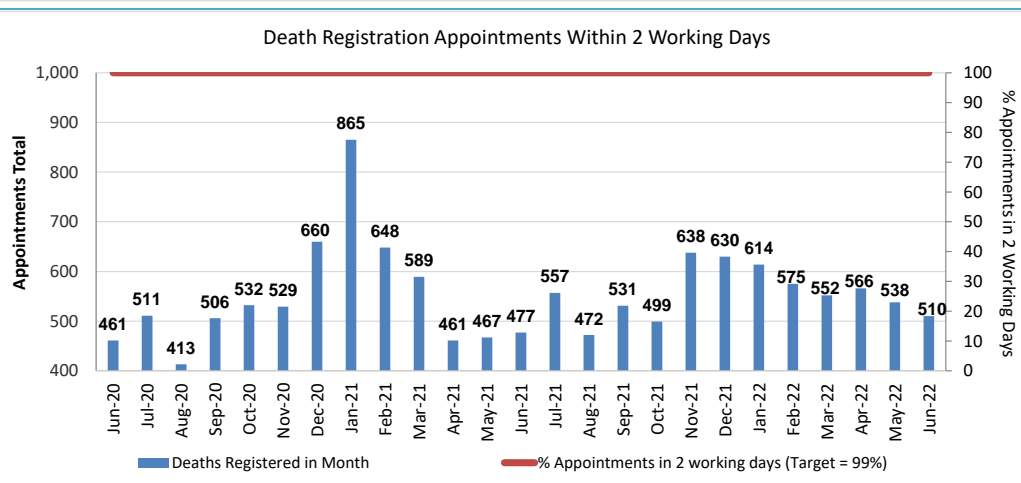
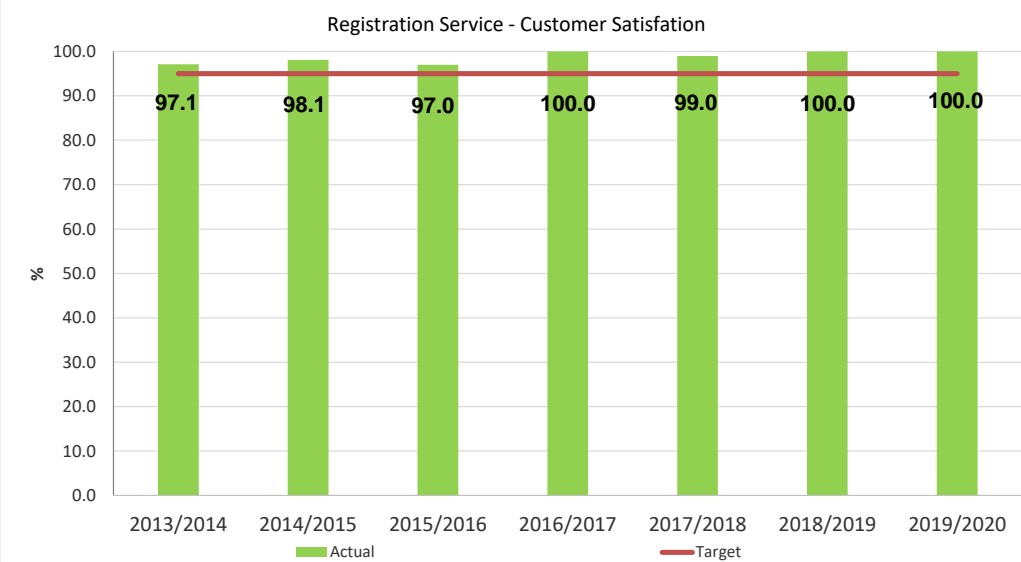
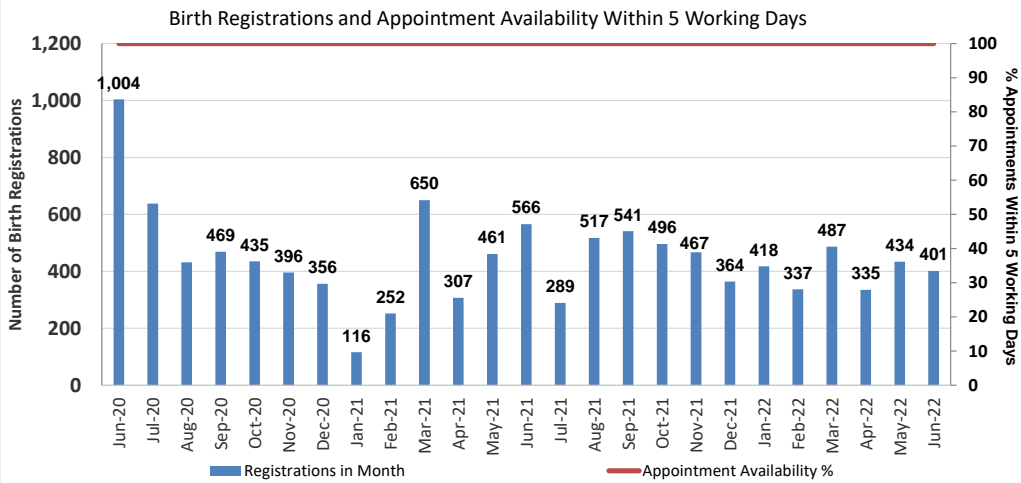
## Registration and Coroner's

INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Birth registration appointments within 5 working days	Green	No Noticeable Change	Anyone contacting the service in the first quarter of 2022/2023 to register a birth was offered a convenient appointment within 5 working days. The facility for the public to book birth appointments on-line was restricted for three weeks in July last year, but was made fully-available again in August and has remained so since then. Birth registrations in the April to June quarter totalled 1,170, down 12.3% compared with the 1,334 registered in the same quarter last year.	Where possible, additional birth-registration appointments continue to be made available at the Worcester, Redditch, and Kidderminster offices. Evening appointments remain available at Bromsgrove, Evesham, Kidderminster, and Malvern. These measures should help ensure that anyone contacting the service to register a birth can be offered a convenient appointment within 5 working days.	The service will follow all national guidelines in respect of the registration of births and will keep residents informed of any changes via the website, social media, and local media.
Customer Satisfaction	Green	No Noticeable Change	General Register Office requires annual user surveys to be held, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, discretion has been given to each Registration Service to judge the best time and method to undertake its next exercise. Current demands on the service mean it is likely to be later in 2022 before they are conducted. In the last survey (November 2019), 93% of people rated the service as 'very good', the remaining 7% rating it as 'good'. The overall 100% satisfaction matches 18/19's out-turn, although the 'very good' percentage has risen by one percentage point.	Each survey provides statistical summaries and user feedback, allowing areas for improvement to be identified and worked on during the course of the coming year. However, monitoring of comments received from the public on a day-to-day basis continues and where necessary, responses and actions ensue.	The confirmed result and detailed report will be made available to the public. As in previous years, feedback will inform the Service Plan.
Death registration appointments within 2 working days	Green	No Noticeable Change	Face-to-face registrations of deaths resumed as soon as the Coronavirus Act lapsed in March. For the whole of the April-to-June quarter, additional appointment calendars were opened to enable more deaths to be registered, with four Registration Offices offering evening appointments and some Saturday opening. The number of deaths registered in April, May and June was x, up x.x% from 1,405 in the same three months last year.	The procedures in place prior to the pandemic have, in essence, been restored. However, in anticipation of the increase in workload that the restored procedures would entail, staff have been trained so they can undertake a variety of roles, ensuring greater service resilience. Increased availability of appointments is beneficial in many cases, such as those in which families require a prompt death registration to facilitate a burial in accordance with faith beliefs. Essentially,	Local arrangements and practices will be reviewed in the light of any further central government and General Register Office guidance and feedback from staff and service users.



## Registration and Coroner's

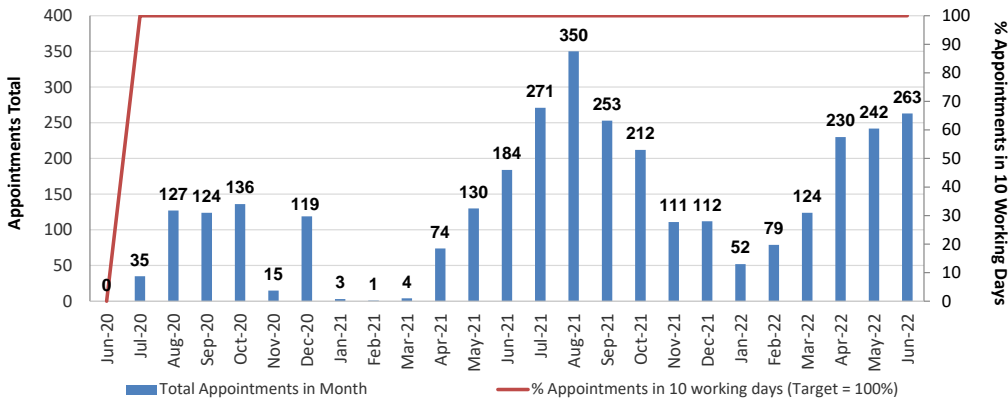
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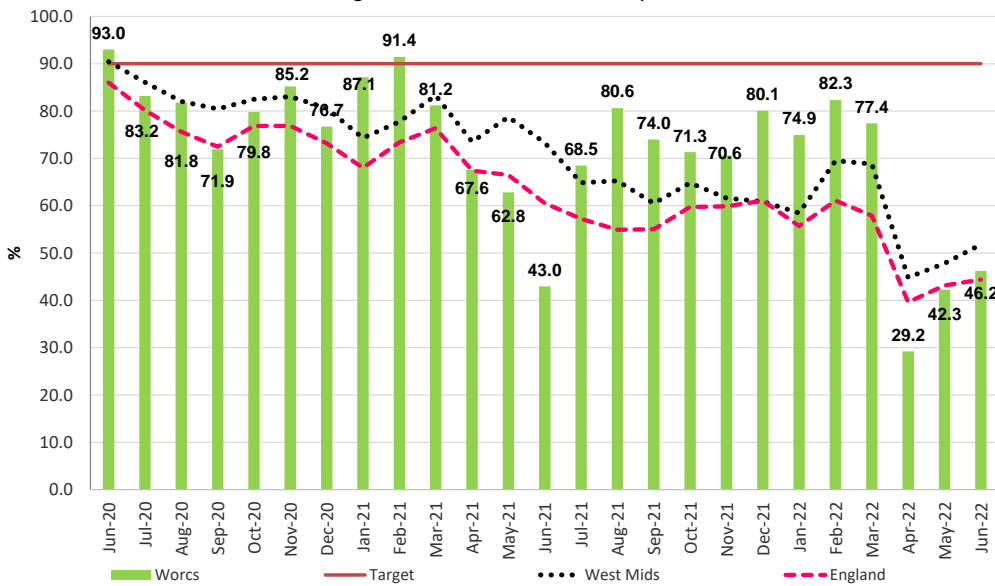
INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Marriage/civil partnership notice appointments within 10 working days	No Status	No Noticeable Change	All couples seeking a marriage/civil partnership notice appointment in quarter 1 were offered one within 10 working days. The lifting of the last limits on attendee numbers in June last year led to a sharp increase in partnership requests received. Ceremonies figures over the last few months indicate a return of the traditional seasonal pattern: fewer ceremonies in the winter; a steady increase from March; a busy summer peak.	The volume of appointments is being monitored. Approved Premises' share of ceremonies is rising (59.2% in quarter 1; Jan-Mar 49.8%). Since April 2022, all approved premises in England and Wales have been able to host ceremonies outdoors without having to use a permanent structure. Couples continue to be advised about the registration procedures they must follow to comply with the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths Act 2021 and the need to liaise with their venue about any capacity limits.	Guidance and web pages will be updated to inform residents of how any future changes to national guidance or local procedures that will impact on the booking and/or staging of ceremonies.
Registration of deaths within 5 days	Red	Improving	June's 46.2% improved upon May's 42.3% and April's 29.2% (the lowest-ever calendar-month figure). June's out-turn was also above the percentage for England (44.4%), albeit below the West Midlands region's 51.8%. If instances where paperwork was received on or after the fourth day are removed from June's calculation, the percentage registered in 5 days would have risen to 51%. Deaths registered in the April-to-June quarter totalled 1,054, up 201 (23.6%) compared with the total for the same period last year and down 27% from 1,444 in April, May, and June 2020. Nationally, the increase relative to 2021 was 14.9%.	Recent months deterioration in performance locally, regionally, and nationally is mainly due to GPs' processing of paperwork. In some instances where the certifying GP is absent, the rule allowing that GP to refer the death registration to the Coroner for assignment to another GP is not being used. There are also still plenty of instances of paperwork being received from GPs on or after the fourth day following a death. The National Panel for Registration has asked GRO to raise the matter with DHSC and the National Medical Examiner. Locally, there will be further engagement with GPs and continued monitoring of how quickly appointments are booked once the appropriate paperwork is to hand.	Monitoring of monthly out-turns to continue as a means of gauging the effectiveness of the local and national measures outlined in 'Current Activity'. Local procedures will be revised if any changes to the guidelines or local reviews make such adaptations necessary.
Still-birth registration appointments within 2 working days	Green	No Noticeable Change	As long as the required paperwork was in place, in quarter 1 nobody had to wait more than two days for an appointment. At the end of each working day, there was always appointment availability on the next working day. Appointments were booked for either the same day the request was received or the next day, provided the required information was supplied.	Daily monitoring of appointment calendars continues and staff have been trained so they can undertake a variety of roles, ensuring greater service resilience. In addition, Registration Offices' hours across Worcestershire are being adjusted to offer late nights on various days to meet customer requirements.	Local arrangements and practices will be reviewed in light of any changed General Register Office guidance and/or feedback from service users and staff.

GRAPH

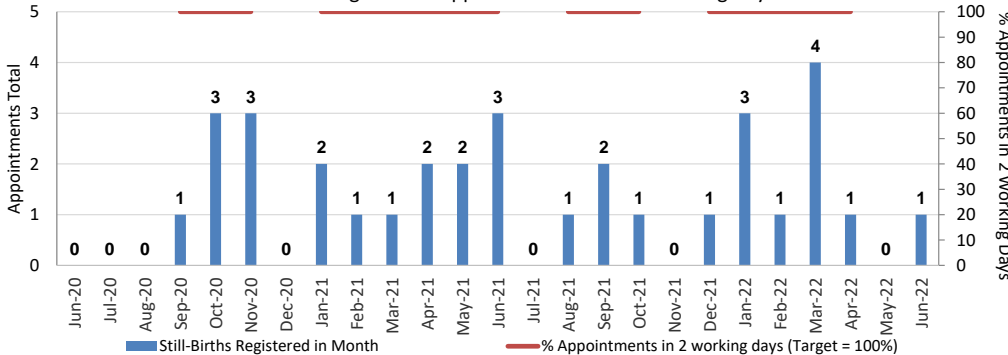
Marriage/Civil Partnership Notice Appointments Within 10 Working Days



Registration of Deaths Within 5 Days



Still-Birth Registration Appointments Within 2 Working Days



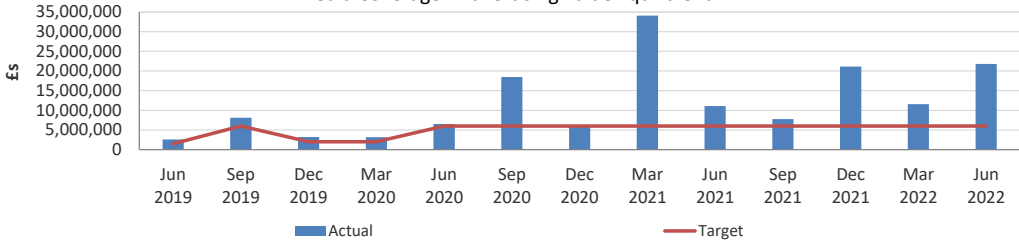
## Communications and Consumer Relations

INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Advertising Value Equivalent calculated from media coverage from a basket of external publications	Green	Improving	The annual target is £6 million. In quarter 1, Homes for Ukraine, the Corporate Plan launch, budget, Cabinet changes, the Hampton and Kepam bridges, and Platinum Jubilee comms all supported the increase in coverage, ensuring a well-above-target out-turn.	Focus on effective media relations and proactive planning.	Proactive media.
Increase proactive engagement with the media	Green	No Noticeable Change	Our level of proactive versus reactive media engagement remains stable (an above-target 67% at the end of June, the same as at the end of March).	There is an emphasis on proactivity to showcase the County Council. Daily focus, weekly creative brainstorm, increased planning.	Continued focus on all media channels.
Increasing staff engagement	Green	Improving	The staff survey that ran from 7th February to 7th March inclusive had a 71.5% response rate, the best to date. Staff have been thanked for participating. The previous-highest response rate was 70% for the previous survey in September 2020. The extended gap between surveys was due to the County Council's COVID-19 response.	Workforce updates to continue to be provided via Staff Briefings and regular emails. These will provide progress reports about the actions put in place in response to the themes raised in the survey, aligned to the Workforce Strategy.	The next Staff Survey is planned for January/February 2023
Compliments received	No Status	N/A	46 compliments were received in the April-to-June quarter, down 22 (32.4%) compared with the number received in the preceding three months and 20 (30.3%) less than the number received in the same three-month period last year.		
Stage 2 Children's Social Care complaints completed inside 65 days	Amber	Improving	Performance improved during the first quarter of the 2022/2023 financial year, the percentage of Stage 2 children's social care complaints completed in 65 days rising to an amber-rated 71% from the previous quarter's red-rated 40%.	Stage 2 investigations are managed by the Consumer Relations Unit. Investigations can be subject to delays due to factors outside their control, but measures are in place to provide resilience and minimise the risk of delays or, where delays do occur, to minimise their length.	

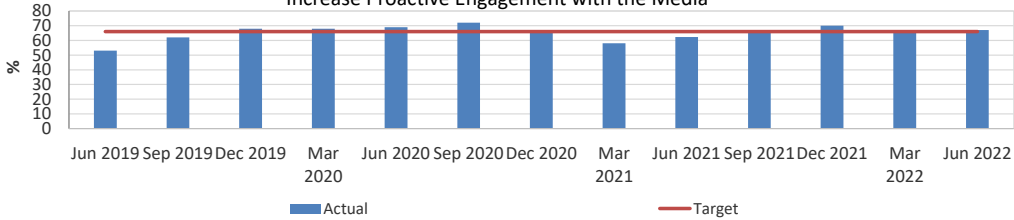
## Communications and Consumer Relations

### GRAPH

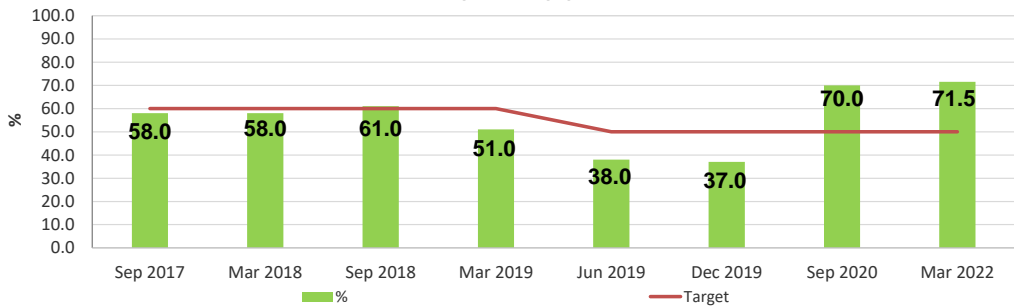
**Media Coverage - Advertising Value Equivalent**



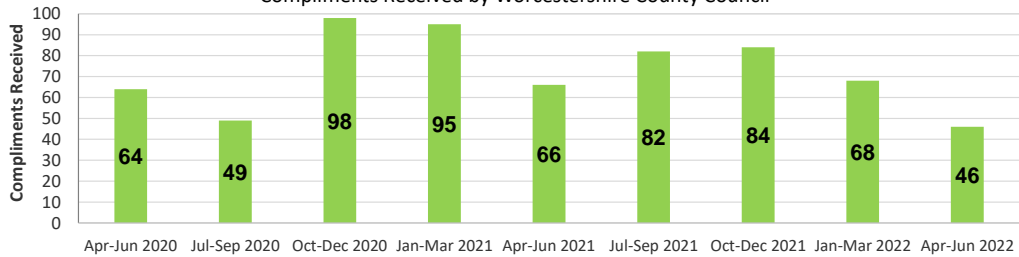
**Increase Proactive Engagement with the Media**



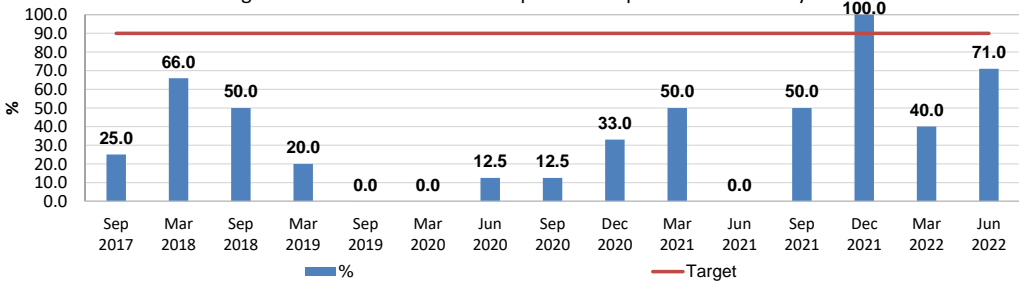
**Increasing Staff Engagement**



**Compliments Received by Worcestershire County Council**



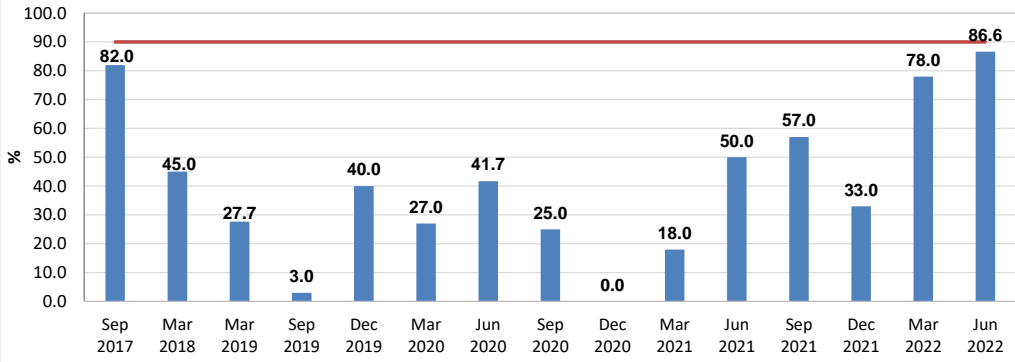
**Stage 2 Children's Social Care Complaints Completed Inside 65 Days**



INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Stage 2 corporate complaints in 25 days	Amber	Improving	Stage 2 investigations are managed by the Consumer Relations Team. The overall out-turn for April, May, and June was 86.6%, up from the out-turn for the previous three months, which was 78%, itself an improvement upon the red-rated October-to-December 2021 result of 33%.	Complaint responses can exceed completion limits due to a variety of reasons, such as the need to collate responses from a variety of external bodies and individuals. Not all of these reasons are completely within the County Council's control. Monitoring of timeliness of completions continues and reasons for late completions are investigated.	Monitoring will continue of response times, time needed to identify sources of information, workloads, and resilience due to annual leave.
Strategic Leadership Team complaint reports provided on time	Green	No noticeable change	All reports submitted in the last quarter of 2021/2022 were on time, maintaining the customary 100% level of performance in respect of this measure.	N/A	N/A
Traffic across social-media channels	Green	Deteriorating	The direction of travel deteriorated relative to the previous quarter due to Purdah (meaning a reduction of comms output) and the previous quarter's flood communications, which had significantly high engagement. It should be noted that engagements, link clicks, and followers have all continued to increase regardless, indicating positive communication relevance and demand.	Consistent and regular social media engagement continues.	Continue to prioritise community growth.

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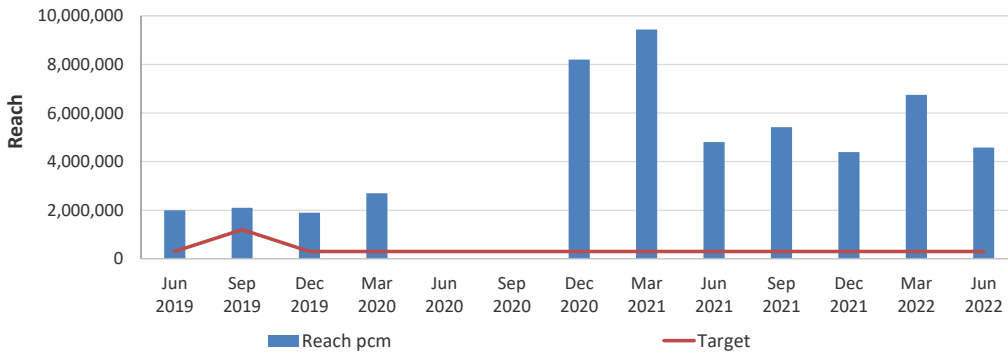
Stage 2 Corporate Complaints Completed in 25 Days



Strategic Leadership Team Complaint Reports Provided on Time



Traffic Across Social-Media Channels



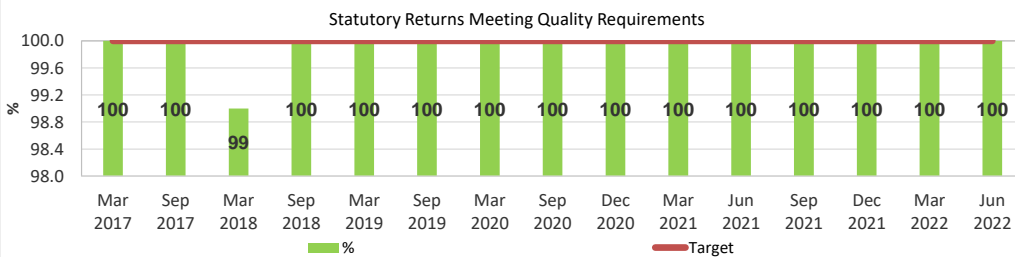
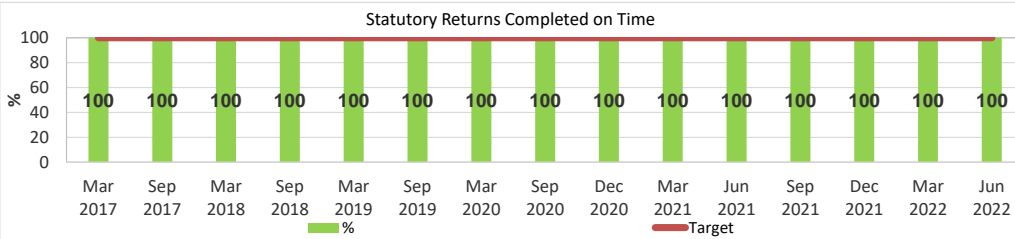
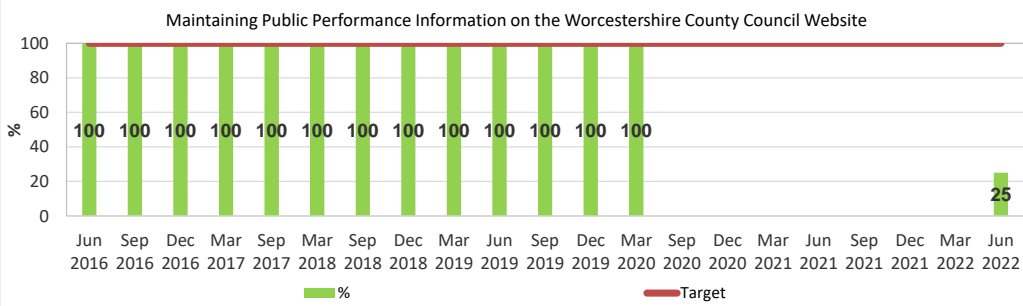
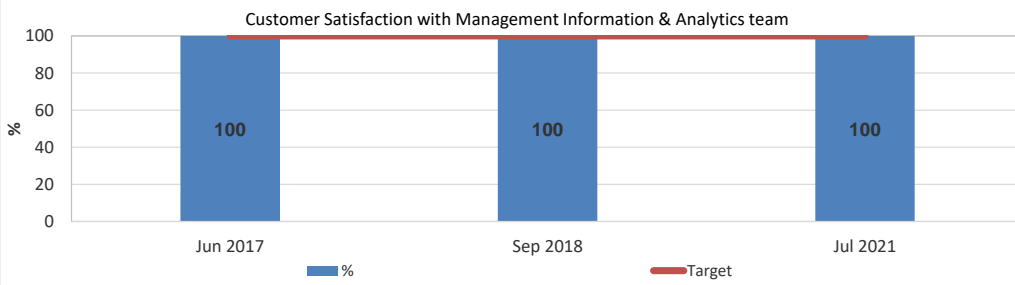
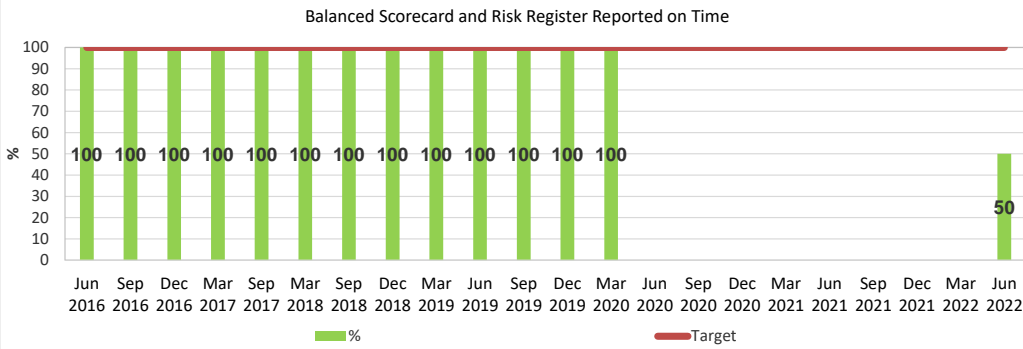
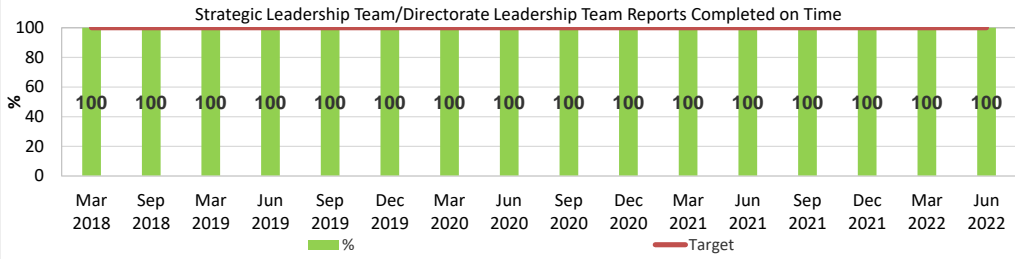
## Business Intelligence

INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
All HR Strategic Leadership Team/ Directorate Leadership Team reports completed on time	Green	No noticeable change	All HR reports have been produced and reported to deadlines and to a high quality.	We continue to seek customer feedback as a means of improving the package of reports we produce for our customers.	A review of the content of the reports will be undertaken to ensure the reports meet customer requirements.
Balanced Scorecard reported on time	Red	No noticeable change	March 2020 was the last full update of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Reporting was paused due to COVID-19 response requirements, but a 2020/2021 end-of-year performance summary was presented to Performance Board in June 2021. A corporate level Performance report for 2021/22 financial year has been presented to SLT and Performance Board.	Development of new public facing performance report (PowerBI). Construction of sub-corporate-level performance framework (directorate and service level).	New performance management approaches will continue to be developed in 2022/2023. Indicator framework under development to report against refreshed Corporate Plan's priorities.
Customer Satisfaction with Management Information & Analytics team	Green	No noticeable change	The most recent survey result is from the summer 2021 and demonstrates the team has maintained a high level of customer satisfaction throughout the pandemic.	Completion of survey and production of report, which will include qualitative feedback as well as an overall satisfaction rating.	Reviewing customer feedback and any suggestions for improvements to services, to be followed by implementation of agreed improvement actions and inclusion of satisfaction data in future performance reports.
Maintain the public performance information on the Worcestershire County Council Website - published every six months	Red	No noticeable change	March 2020's Balanced Scorecard is the most recent on the County Council's website, reporting being paused due to COVID-19 response requirements. This indicator is therefore red-rated, although performance summaries were presented to Performance Board, Scrutiny Panels, DLTs, etc. throughout 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.	Indicators are being reviewed and updated in the new performance-management system and new performance-management approaches are being developed. 2021/2022 quarter 4 performance reports are being used to demonstrate the functionality of the new reporting system as well as providing end-of-financial-year information.	New Indicator framework under development to report against refreshed Corporate Plan's priorities. Future uploads to the website of corporate-level Scorecard summaries will be as per corporately-agreed requirements. Development of new public facing
Statutory returns completed on time	Green	N/A	All returns completed on time or within agreed extension period.	We are working with DfE and schools to understand upcoming statutory reporting requirements for education in light of COVID-19 guidance.	Continue to monitor. Indicator updated at end of quarters 2 and 4.
Statutory returns meeting quality requirements	Green	No noticeable change	No issues with returns to date	We are working with DfE and schools to understand upcoming statutory reporting requirements for education in light of COVID-19 guidance.	Continue to monitor. Indicator updated at end of quarters 2 and 4.



## Business Intelligence

### GRAPH



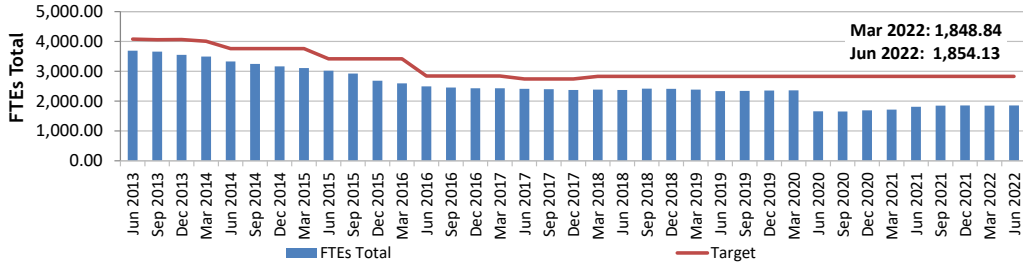
## HR, ICT and Corporate Information Governance Team

INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Employees - Actual Full-Time Equivalents	N/A	N/A	FTEs at the end of the first quarter of 2022/2023 equated to 1,854.13, up 0.3% from 1,848.84 at the end of March and 0.1% higher than at the end of December 2021 (1,853.02). Changes in headcount from quarter to quarter reflect some of the initiatives active at any one time (e.g. TUPE in/out, recruitment drives).	Confirmed data for each quarter is normally available towards the end of the first month of the following quarter.	
Sickness Rates	Red	Deteriorating	At the end of quarter 1 of 2022/2023, the average days sick per person (FTE) was 2.20, up from 2.02 at the same stage of 2021/2022. The average for the whole of 2021/2022 was 7.95 (the target is 7 or less). The equivalent figure at the end of 2020/2021 was 6.00; at the end of 2019/2020 it was 8.10.	Monitoring and management of sickness absence continues. Confirmed data for each quarter is normally available towards the end of the first month of the following quarter.	
Days lost through long-term sickness	N/A	N/A	Long-term absences are episodes of 21 or more calendar days. 2022/2023's quarter 1 long-term absences totalled 3,353, the highest total at the end of quarter 1 since 2019/2020, when the total at the end of June was 3,583.66. The total at the end of June this year was up 10.3% up compared with the figure for the first quarter of 2021/2022 (3,040.50).	Monitoring and management of sickness absence continues. Confirmed data for each quarter is normally available towards the end of the first month of the following quarter.	
Days lost through short-term sickness	N/A	N/A	Short-term absences in the first quarter of the current financial year totalled 726. As with the long-term sickness figure, this is the highest quarter 1 total for three years, the figure at the end of June 2019 being 1,245.02. The total at the end of June this year was 17.2% higher than the figure for April to June last year, which was 619.50.	Monitoring and management of sickness absence continues. Confirmed data for each quarter is normally available towards the end of the first month of the following quarter.	
Staff turnover rate	N/A	N/A	Leavers in the financial year as a percentage of the workforce. 2021/2022's final figure of 10.45% was above 2020/2021's 7.03%, but below 2019/2020's 10.88% and 2018/2019's 10.97%. The quarter 1 2022/2023 out-turn of 2.87% is higher than the 2017-2021 average for April to June, which was 2%.		

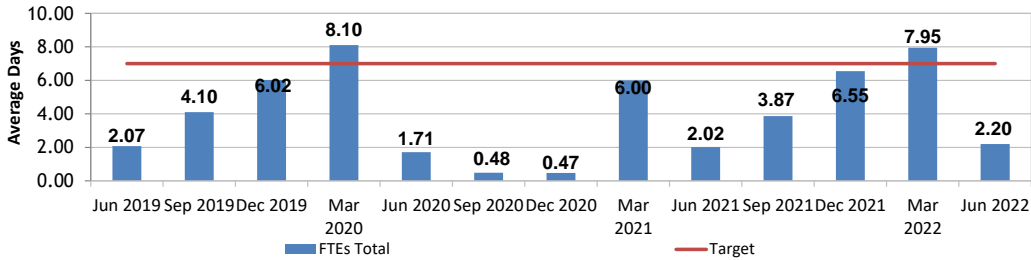
## HR, ICT and Corporate Information Governance Team

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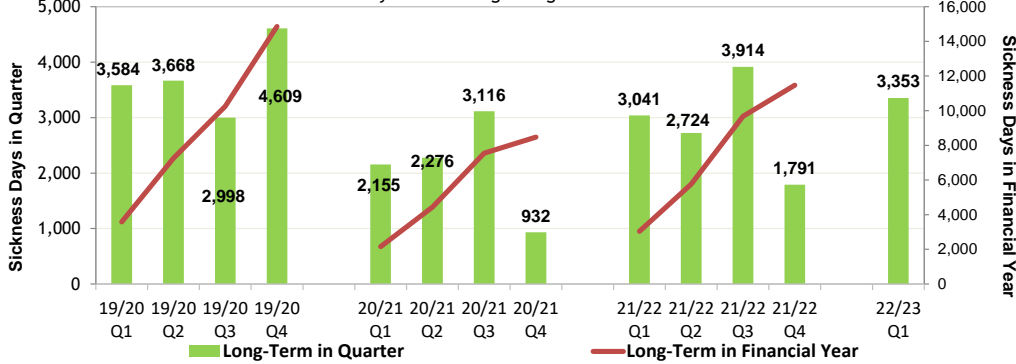
Employees - Actual Full-Time Equivalents



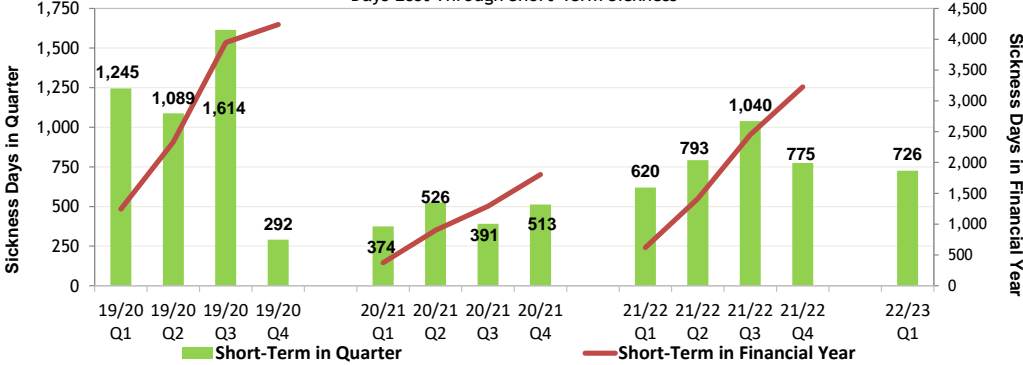
Sickness Rates



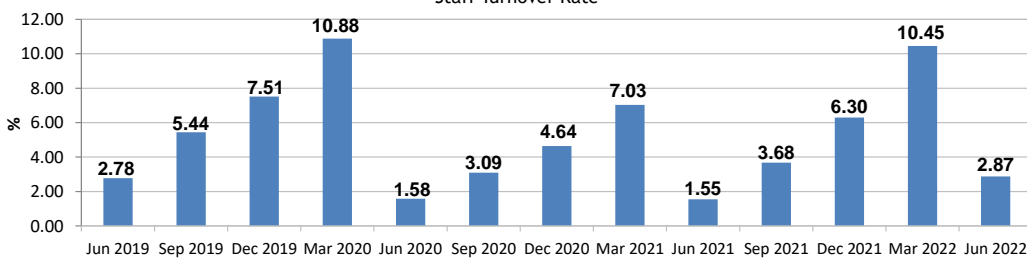
Days Lost Through Long-Term Sickness



Days Lost Through Short-Term Sickness



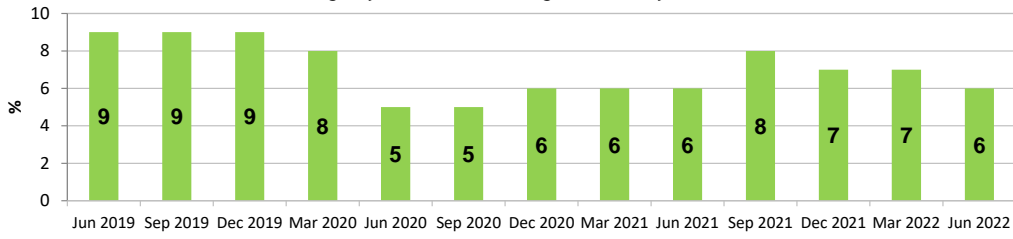
Staff Turnover Rate



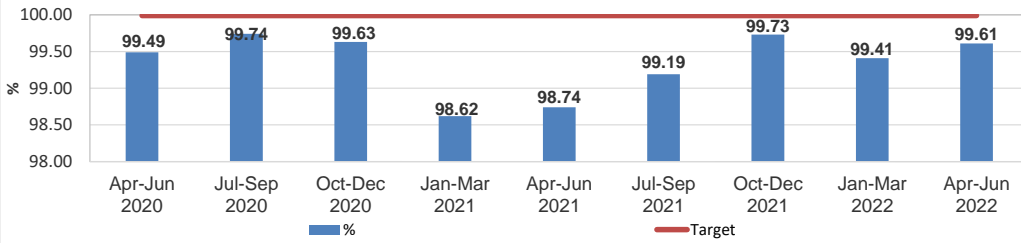
INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Cost of agency staff as a percentage of the total pay-bill	N/A	No Noticeable Change	Agency spend at each quarter-end as a percentage of the total pay bill. Since 1st October 2019, the figure has excluded WCF. 2022/2023's percentage on 30th June was 6%, down from 7% on 31st March. On 30th September last year, the figure was 8%		
ICT - Local Area Network (LAN) Availability	Amber	No Noticeable Change	Availability in the April-to-June quarter was 99.61%, up from 99.41% in the previous quarter. The figure for the whole of the 2021/2022 financial year was 99.48% (2020/2021: 99.37%.) The target is for 99.99% Local Area Network availability across all sites.	LAN infrastructure availability across all sites is based on a 24x7x365 business need. Monitoring of network hardware (switches) is achieved via the SolarWinds application. Instances where the cause of non-availability is beyond WCC control are included in calculations.	
ICT - Critical Application Availability	Amber	Deteriorating	The target is for 99.90% available time for all critical applications. There were only two Priority 1 incidents in quarter 1. In April, there was an issue related to the interface that ensures secure access to operating systems. This affected access to Liquid Logic, 162 minutes of downtime being logged. The second incident occurred in June. This also affected Liquid Logic. It was an issue with the application itself, which was resolved by the supplier. Downtime for this incident was 88 minutes.	Monitoring and prompt resolution of Priority 1 incidents remains key for the systems covered by this indicator, all of which have been identified as critical to the 24x7x365 business for Social Care, Symphony (the Library management information system), Jadu (Website), Outlook/Exchange (E-mail), and telephony. This includes not just the critical business applications themselves, but also all underpinning infrastructure required to deliver access to the application. The indicator is calculated by considering total downtime of a critical application for all users. For such occurrences, there will be an associated Priority 1 incident.	
Corporate Information Governance Team - FOI/EIR and SARs	Green	FOI/EIR - Deteriorating SARs - Deteriorating	Both quarter 1 out-turns were down compared with the preceding quarter's, although the Subject Access Requests figure was only slightly down and remained above target. The Freedom of Information requests figure dipped largely due to staff absence leading to reduced capacity within the Corporate Information Governance Team. Both managers had to provide information and staff dealing with and issuing responses struggled to keep up with the workload.	Directorate Information Access Coordinators (IACs) are working with staff and managers to improve provision of information so response rates to requesters can improve.	Organisation-wide reminder to all WCC and WCF staff to respond in a timely manner when asked for information to enable responses to be made within timescales. Monitoring to continue.

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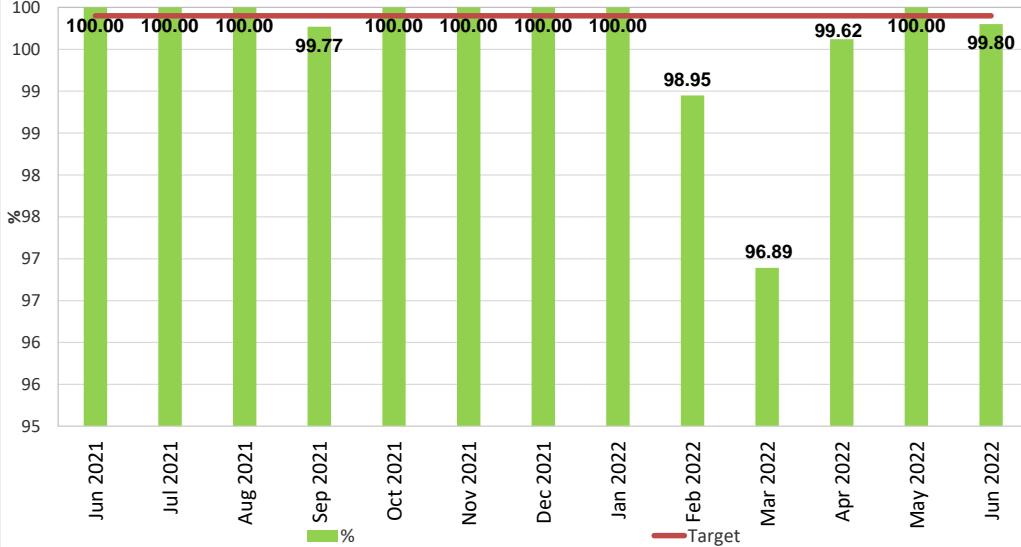
**Agency Staff as a Percentage of Total Pay-Bill**



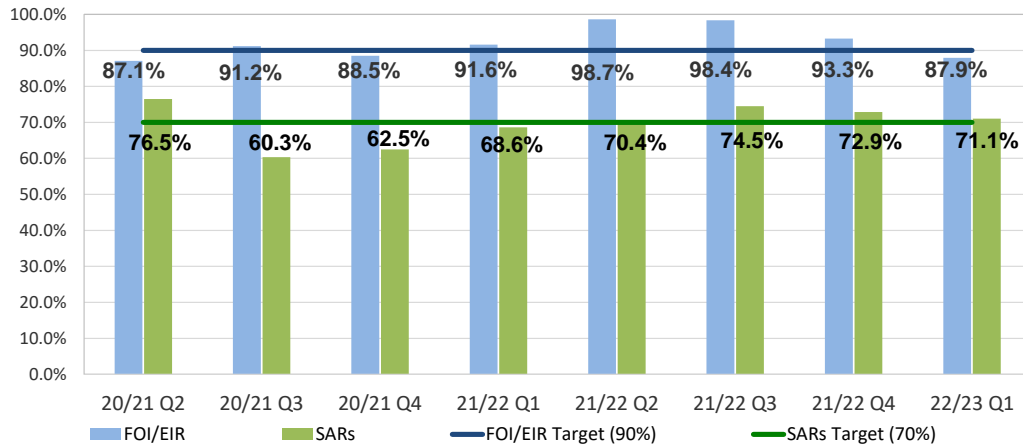
**ICT - Local Area Network (LAN) Availability**



**ICT - Critical Application Availability**



**CIMU - FOI/EIR and Subject Access Requests (SARs)**



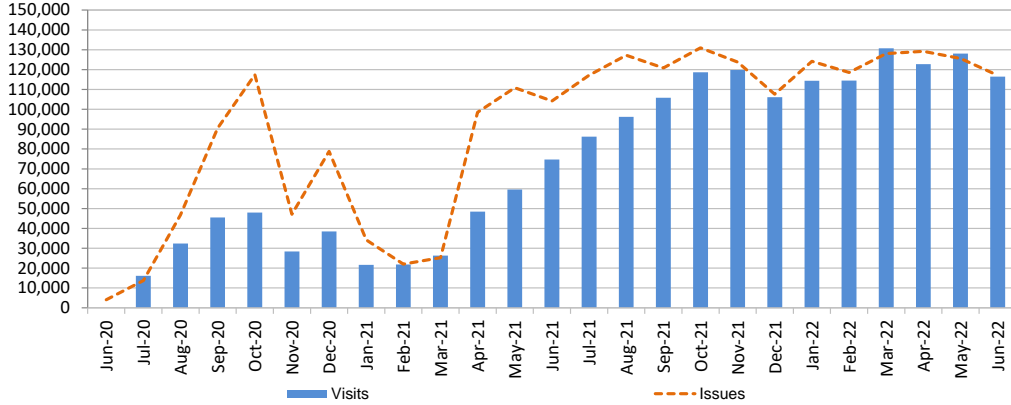
## Communities

INDICATOR TITLE	RAG	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	PERFORMANCE DETAILS	CURRENT ACTIVITY	FUTURE ACTIVITY
Library Visits Library Issues	No Status	Visits - N/A Issues - N/A	The April-to-June visits total (367,304) amounted to 55.7% of the April-to-June 2019 total of 659,537. Libraries Connected's June comparator information indicates visits nationally equated to 60% of the June 2019 level. The latest-available Libraries Connected national comparator data indicates borrowing of physical items is at 83% of the 2019/2020 level. Locally, June's physical-items issues total equated to 82% of June 2019's total.	Libraries continue to provide the full range of on-site services. These include Summer Reading Challenge, meetings of social-connecting groups, children's activities, adult learning courses, digital support, and employability sessions. Libraries are also now home to Worcestershire Business & Intellectual Property Centre, giving free advice, information, and resources to businesses. Monitoring of the Libraries Unlocked schemes at Droitwich and Stourport is being carried out weekly.	Actions to increase library usage will include the ongoing Libraries Unlocked schemes. Local events and activities will be promoted. The opt-in e-mail service will keep members better informed about new library services and future plans, as well as providing a feedback facility. 2022's Customer Voice Survey responses will also help inform planning and promotional activities.
Library Issues: e-books, e-audio books, e-magazines, and e-newspapers	No Status	No Noticeable Change	The April-to-June issues total was 81,148, the highest such quarter 1 total (April to June 2021: 59,863). E-newspapers' contribution was 38.5%, e-audiobooks' share was 28%, e-books' was 20.9%, and e-magazines' 12.7%. Relative to the e-issues total for June 2019 (7,386), June's total of 25,606 was 346.7% higher. Worcestershire's increase relative to pre-COVID levels continues to comfortably exceed the English average.	Efforts continue to promote the e-library. These include setting up Borrowbox displays in libraries and highlighting on the Library Service website the Digital Library Hub, which provides a one-stop shop for e-services. Work is ongoing with the e-book and e-audiobook supplier to expand the range of titles and the number of available copies of already-held titles. Nationally, Libraries Connected is in discussions with publishers about libraries being given access to e-versions of the most-recent published titles.	Monitoring of e-issues and the number of active users (including new users) will continue as a means of tracking the appeal to residents of the e-collections and the effectiveness of promotional campaigns, as well as providing evidence to support any review discussions with the service providers (BorrowBox for e-books, Overdrive for e-magazines, Press Reader for e-papers).
Museum Visits	No Status	Increasing	County Museum's April-to-June visits total was 5,850, which equates to 94.7% of the total of 6,176 for the last pre-COVID April-to-June period (2019). Of June's visits, 259 (13.5%) were by children visiting in school groups, the highest calendar-month total since November 2018's 533. June's schools admissions income totalled £1,056 (May: £109), with Museums Worcestershire's share being £740 (May: £76).	This year's school summer-holiday events commence on 26th July. Throughout August, there are daily crafts and trail events. The Trust's series of monthly outdoor events commenced in May. Tickets for all events can be purchased on-line. The County Museum's 2022 information leaflet is available in a variety of formats, including on-line. It provides site accessibility information, ticket prices, how to book group and school visits, and this year's events programme.	Work will continue with the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust to further promote the whole site, accredited by the Visit England Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme for the high standard of the museum and visitor experience. The Trust will stage outdoor events. County Museum staff will continue to run events and undertake outreach visits to schools in the county and outside it.

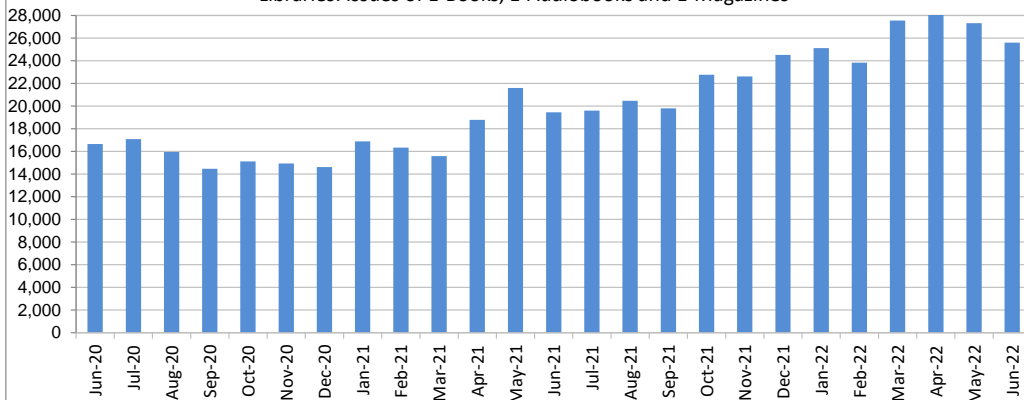
## Communities

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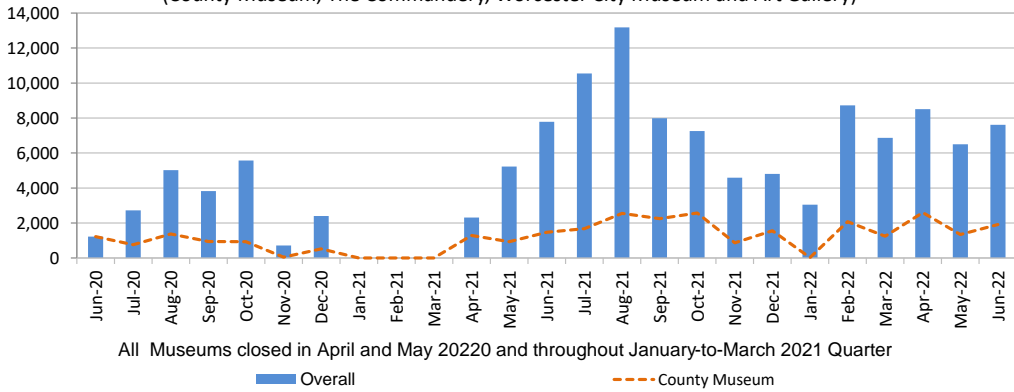
**Libraries: Visits and Issues**



**Libraries: Issues of E-Books, E-Audiobooks and E-Magazines**

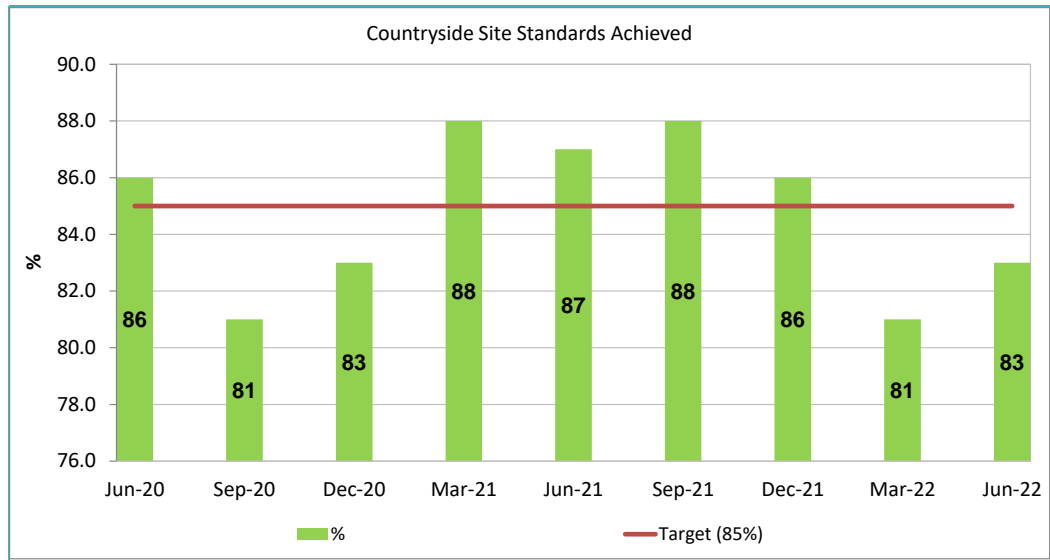


**Museums Worcestershire Visits  
(County Museum, The Commandery, Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery)**



<p>Countryside Standards Achieved</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Improving</p>	<p>83% of Site Standards were met at the end of quarter 1, up from 81% at the end of March. Quarter 2 should see further improvement, for although site usage in summer is high, the settled weather facilitates the undertaking of regular site maintenance programmes and ad hoc repairs. However, a lot of site furniture such as permanent picnic benches and signage is coming to the end of its life, the impact on furniture of weathering and normal levels of usage having been accelerated by increased usage during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>The regular programme of inspections, groundworks, and repairs should ensure signs and notices, buildings, site furniture, and trails are repaired and well-maintained. The positive impacts of the work done to address the issues arising out of quarter 4's tree inspections and January's encroachments at Hartlebury have been noted, but inspections and monitoring continue.</p>	<p>Sites' usage will increase during the school summer holiday period, given good, settled weather. The service will continue to promote each site's natural attractions, facilities, and any events and activities being staged. The schedule of regular inspections will identify any issues arising from increased usage, but any issues or concerns raised by visitors will be monitored and addressed as necessary.</p>
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## **CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has requested an update on the performance of Stage 2 Children's Social Care complaints completed inside 65 days, Stage 2 Corporate complaints in 25 days, as well as compliments received.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services and Communication and the Complaints Manager have been invited to the meeting.

#### **Background**

3. The Panel has previously received detailed reports in September 2019, March 2021 and November 2021 setting out the 3 different representation procedures that Worcestershire County Council (the Council) follows for Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Corporate (which includes all other Council services). In addition to the 3 procedures, the Council is also subject to the complaints process of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) service.

#### **Annual Reports for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Corporate Representations**

4. The 2021/22 Annual Reports for Adult Social Care representations, Children's Social Care representations and corporate representations are available on the Council's website:

- [Link to Adult Social Care Statutory Representations and Complaints Procedure Reports](#)
- [Link to Children's Social Care Statutory Representations Procedure - Annual Report 2021-2022](#)
- [Link to Corporate Representations Procedure - Annual Report 2021-2022](#)

5. The reports cover the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and set out the number of compliments, comments and complaints received in the year, broken down by service area; report on outcomes and timescales; and set out learning and improvement in the services in response to the complaints received throughout the year.

6. Finally, they give a flavour of some of the compliments received over the 12-month period and examples are given at Appendix 2. The two social care reports

are a statutory requirement, the corporate report is done by choice to give information to the public.

## Comments

7. Fewer comments are received than complaints, but these can cover the wide range of services that the Council provide from major infrastructure projects, COVID-19 policies and advice and household recycling centres.

8. Comments are passed to the relevant directorates to respond to as appropriate.

## Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Review Letter for 2021/22

9. Each year every local authority receives a letter from the LGSCO which summarises complaints upheld, compliance with the Ombudsman's recommendations and how many cases the local authority had remedied before consideration by the Ombudsman. The LGSCO accepts that their published figures do not match the data collected by local authorities. The LGSCO does not have the capacity to provide further information about the data supplied, therefore within the Council we rely on the data collected by the Consumer Relations Unit. The LGSCO Annual Review Letter for 2021/22 was published on 27 July 2022 and a copy is attached at Appendix 1.

10. 42 complaints were submitted to the LGSCO in 2021-22, This represents 4.8% of the total number, (867 complaints) submitted to the Council in 2021-22. These complaints related to Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Social Care (12 complaints, 5.6% of the 213 complaints made), Adult Social Care (14 complaints, 5.6% of the 247 complaints made), WCF Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (5), Economy and Infrastructure (10) and Commercial and Change (1) which equate to 3.9% of the 407 corporate complaints made.

11. There were 36 complaints determined by the LGSCO in the 2021-22 year. They covered WCF Social Care (12), Adult Social Care (10), Commercial and Change (1), WCF SEND (5) and Economy and Infrastructure (8).

12. Of the 14 determinations from the LGSCO on Corporate matters, 3 were closed after initial investigation as outside jurisdiction, 6 were closed after initial investigation with no further action and 5 were upheld with maladministration and injustice. In terms of payments because of findings, Economy and Infrastructure paid a complainant £150 and WCF SEND paid a total of £20,427.28 to 4 complainants.

13. In terms of the 10 determinations from the LGSCO relating to Adult Social Care, 3 were upheld as maladministration with injustice, 1 was upheld with no further action, 3 were not upheld and 3 were closed after initial inquiries with no further action. In terms of payments because of findings, the People Directorate paid a total of £400 to 2 complainants.

14. Of the 12 Children's Social Care complaints determined by LGSCO, 5 were closed after initial inquiries: out of jurisdiction, 3 were closed after initial inquiries: no

further action, 2 were upheld maladministration and injustice and 2 were not upheld. In terms of payments because of findings, 2 complainants were paid a total of £600.

15. The Annual Review letter sets out that 63% of complaints about the Council investigated by the Ombudsman were upheld, compared to an average of 73% in similar organisations. This was based on 19 investigations. This is an improvement on 2020/21 when 89% of the 9 investigations conducted by the Ombudsman were upheld, as more complaints were investigated but the percentage upheld has dropped. Compliance with the Ombudsman’s recommendations remains the same as the previous year at 100% and this is based on 12 outcomes for the 2021/22 year compared to only 10 the year before. Finally, in 17% of upheld cases, the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This is compared to an average of 8% in similar organisations and is based on 12 upheld decisions. This shows improvement on the previous year when our percentage was 0 and based on only 9 cases.

16. The Ombudsman does voice his concern at the length of time the Council has taken to respond to some inquiries and to carry out agreed recommendations and urges the Council to improve its performance in this respect. The Ombudsman also expresses his view that “complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic...” and urges the Council to consider how the organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility”.

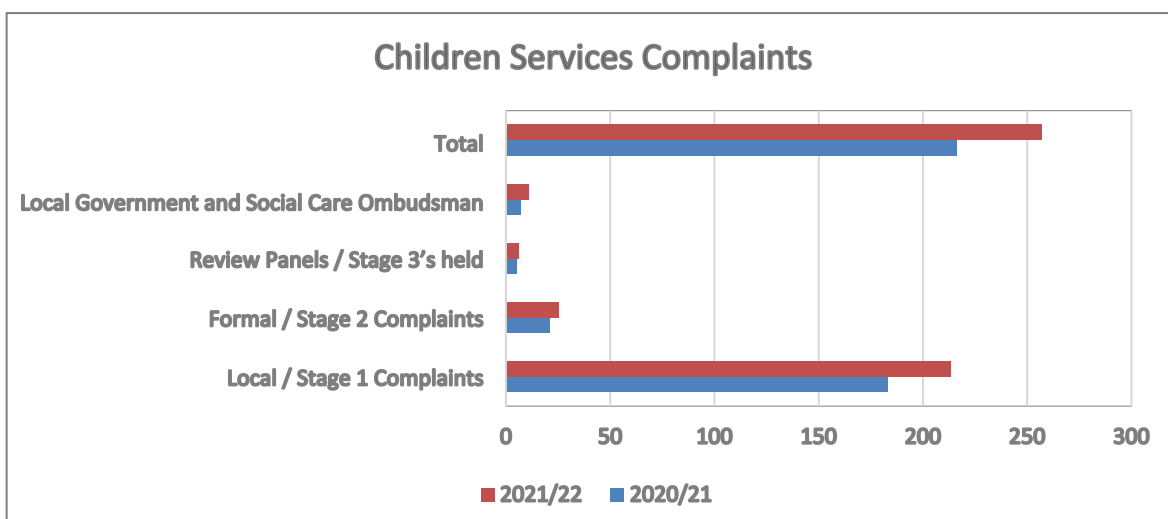
## Performance

17. Please note that the performance figures provided are for the outcomes and response timescales for the complaints that were resolved during 2021/22. These figures do not corollate directly to the number of complaints received during 2021/22.

## Children Social Care Complaints

18. Number of Complaints: Those complaints that go through all 3 stages of the procedure are only counted as one complaint in these categories, although they may cover more than one service.

<b>Children Services Complaints Received</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Local / Stage 1 Complaints	183	213
Formal / Stage 2 Complaints	21	25
Review Panels / Stage 3’s held	5	6
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	7	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>256</b>

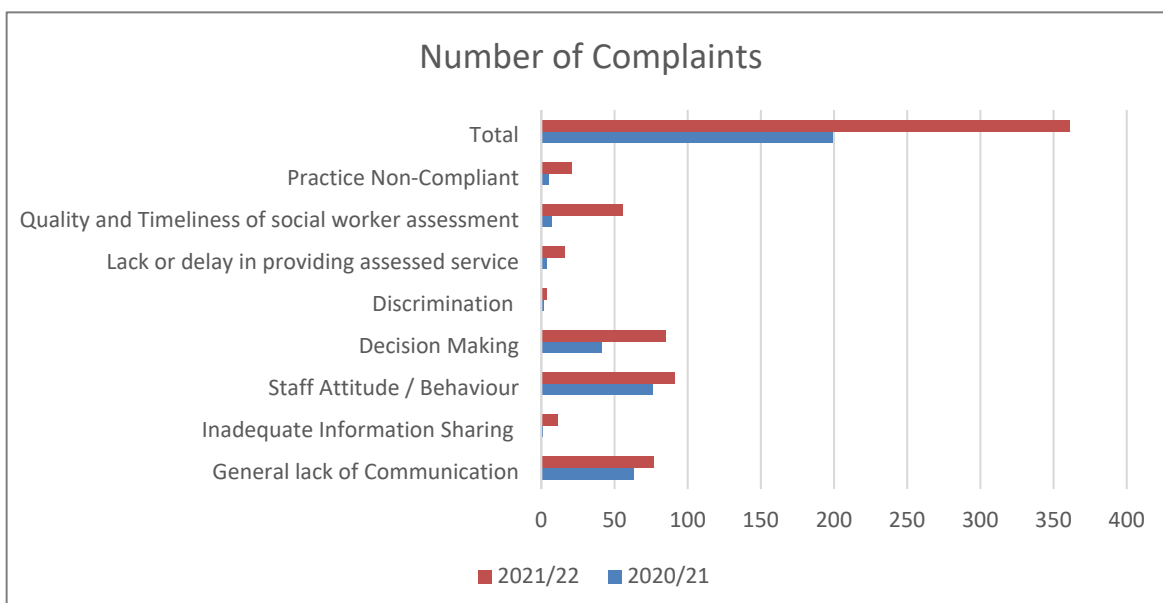


Children Services Team	2020/21	%	2021/22	%
Family Front Door	31	17%	51	23.94%
Adoption (now ACE <sup>1</sup> )	-	-	-	-
Advanced Practitioners	-	-	-	-
Children with Disabilities	5	3%	15	7.04%
Fostering & Kinship	6	3%	8	3.76%
Safeguarding Teams	96	52.5%	89	41.78%
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	-	-	-	-
Support Services (including Supervised Contact)	-	-	1	0.47%
Residential and Commissioning	1	0.5%	-	-
Targeted Early Help / Targeted Family Support	6	3%	9	4.23%
Through Care	38	21%	40	18.78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>100%</b>

19. Nature of Complaints: There is an increase in the nature-of complaints as shown above. This will be due to a larger number of overall complaints, but also reflects a change in the way that complaints are being more accurately recorded between Worcester Children First (WCF) and the Consumer Relations Unit (CRU).

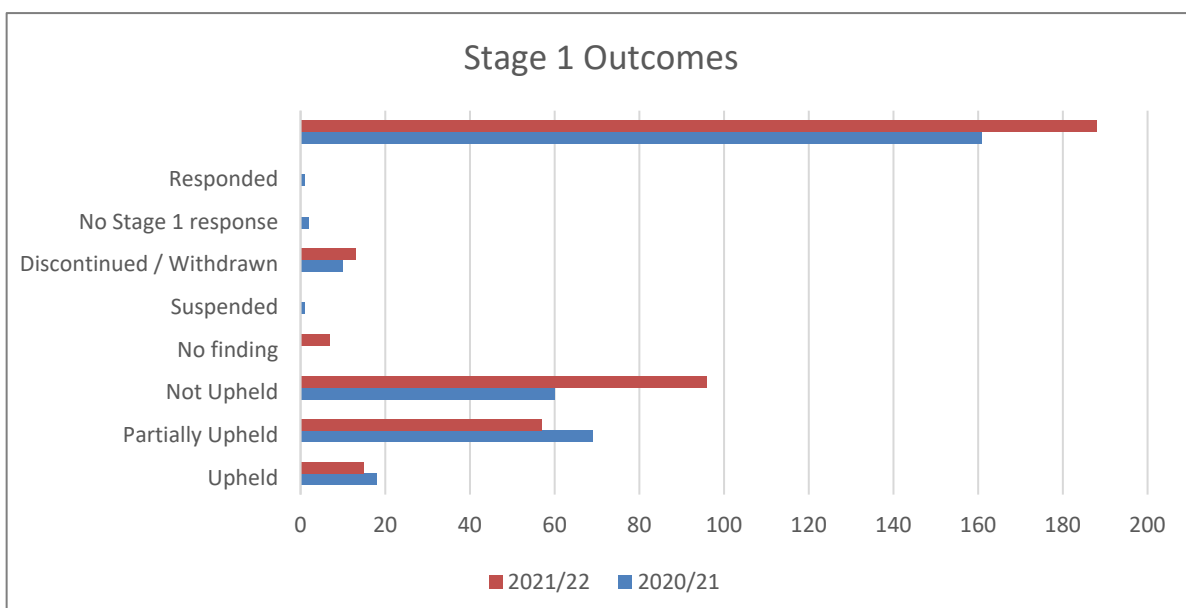
Nature of Complaints	2020/21	%	2021/22	%
General lack of Communication	63	31.5%	77	21%
Inadequate Information Sharing	1	0.5%	11	3%
Staff Attitude / Behaviour	76	38%	91	25%
Decision Making	41	21%	85	24%
Discrimination	2	1%	4	1%
Lack or delay in providing assessed service	4	2%	16	4%
Quality and Timeliness of social worker assessment	7	3.5%	56	16%
Practice Non-Compliant	5	2.5%	21	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> ACE is a regional adoption agency



20. Stage 1 Outcomes: These are the outcomes for the Stage 1 complaints that have been completed this year. This figure is lower than the complaints received as some will have still been in progress at the time of this report and so will not have an outcome yet. Complaints may be suspended when further information is required from the complainant or when court proceedings are underway.

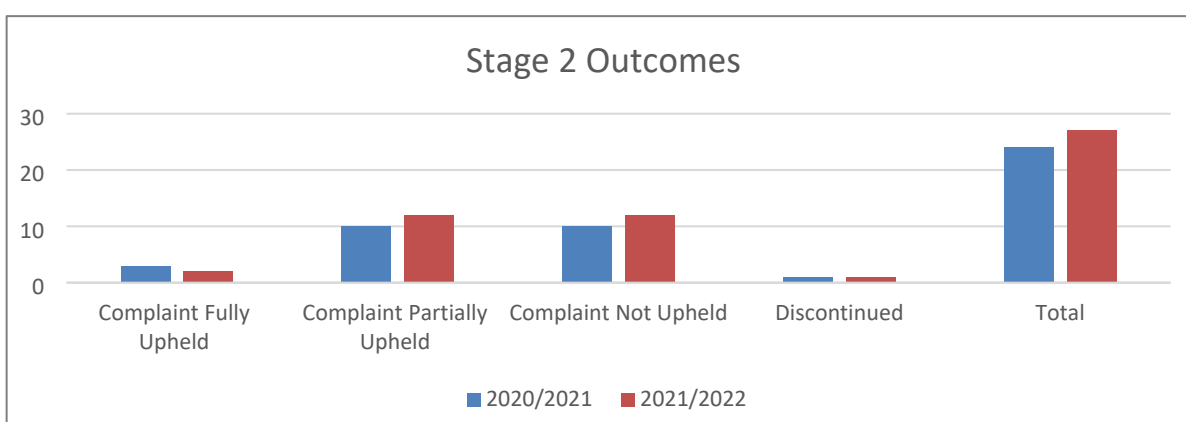
Stage 1 Outcomes	2020/21	%	2021/22	%
Upheld	18	11.2%	15	8%
Partially Upheld	69	42.9%	57	30%
Not Upheld	60	37.3%	96	51%
No finding	-	-	7	4%
Suspended	1	0.6%	-	-
Discontinued / Withdrawn	10	6.2%	13	7%
No Stage 1 response	2	1.2%	-	-
Responded	1	0.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>



<b>Timescales of Stage 1 Complaint Resolutions</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Within 10 working days	30%	15.5%
Within 20 working days	61%	82%
Within 40 working days	8%	2%
After 40 working days	1%	0.5%

21. Stage 2 Outcomes: These figures are for all Stage 2 complaints completed during this reporting year. Some may have been received in the previous year and some investigations were on-going at the end of the year.

<b>Stage 2 Outcomes</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
Complaint Fully Upheld	3	2
Complaint Partially Upheld	10	12
Complaint Not Upheld	10	12
Discontinued	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>





<b>Timescales of Stage 2 Complaint Resolutions</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Within 25 working days	0%	0%
Within 65 working days	17%	70%
More than 65 working days	83%	30%

22. Compliments: Compliments relating to Children's Social Care Services have come from people independent of the local authority. Most compliments received are about staff members, with a few complimenting the service provided.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
Children with Disabilities	2	4
Fostering & Kinship	9	2
QA and Independent Review	-	9
Advanced Social Work Practitioners	-	2
Safeguarding Area	46	33
Family Front Door	18	15
Targeted Early Help	2	10
Through Care	20	6
Child Protection Chairs and Local Authority Designated Officer	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>82</b>

## Adult Social Care Complaints

23. Number of Complaints

### Numbers of Adult Service complaints received

<b>Level</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Low Risk	95	190
Moderate /High Risk	28	43
Informal	22	14
LGO	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>261</b>

### Complaints by Service Area

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2020 -21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Central Services	19	57
Commissioning	6	7
Mental Health & Learning Disabilities	7	42
Area Social Work Teams	39	78
Provider Services	30	74
Quality, Safeguarding, DOLS & Prisons	19	17
Urgent Care	-	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>287</b>

### Service Being Complained About

<b>Service</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>2021 to 2022</b>
Access & Patient Flow Centre	2	-
Brokerage Process	4	1

CHC	2	2
Complaint Process not followed	-	1
Contracted out (Day Care)	-	2
Decision Making	6	34
Discrimination	-	1
Duty, Care and Support Planning	46	39
Financial Assessment/Direct Payment	33	25
Financial (home care)	8	-
Finance	14	22
Externally Commissioned Home Care	13	29
Externally Commissioned Respite	1	1
Externally Commissioned Res/Nursing	7	4
Supported Living	-	2
Other	-	1
Learning Disabilities	2	2
Mental Capacity Assessment	-	4
Promoting Independence	16	14
Safeguarding Processes	12	5
Shared Lives	2	-
Staff	11	11
Standard of Service	118	176
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>376</b>

	2020-21	2021-22
Adult Safeguarding	13	2
Breach of Confidentiality	10	5
Care Plan Assessment	1	1
Changes to call Times	1	2
Continuing Health Care	-	1
Delay in Providing Service	11	2
Delay/Failure to Keep Informed	-	1
Direct Payments	4	8
Discrimination	-	1
Financial	45	14
General lack of Communication	46	35
Inaccurate Information	3	2
Info from Provider	1	1
Lack of or delay in providing assessment	-	1
Lack of Service	9	5
Medication	-	2
Mental Capacity Assessment	-	3
No return of telephone calls	4	6
Other	2	1
Outcome of Decision/Assessment	3	5
Practice non-compliant with leg/process	-	2
Process dec/Res Alloc	2	4
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	34	16
Staff/Training/Qualifications	-	1
Standard of Service Delivery	118	176

Support Planning	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>301</b>

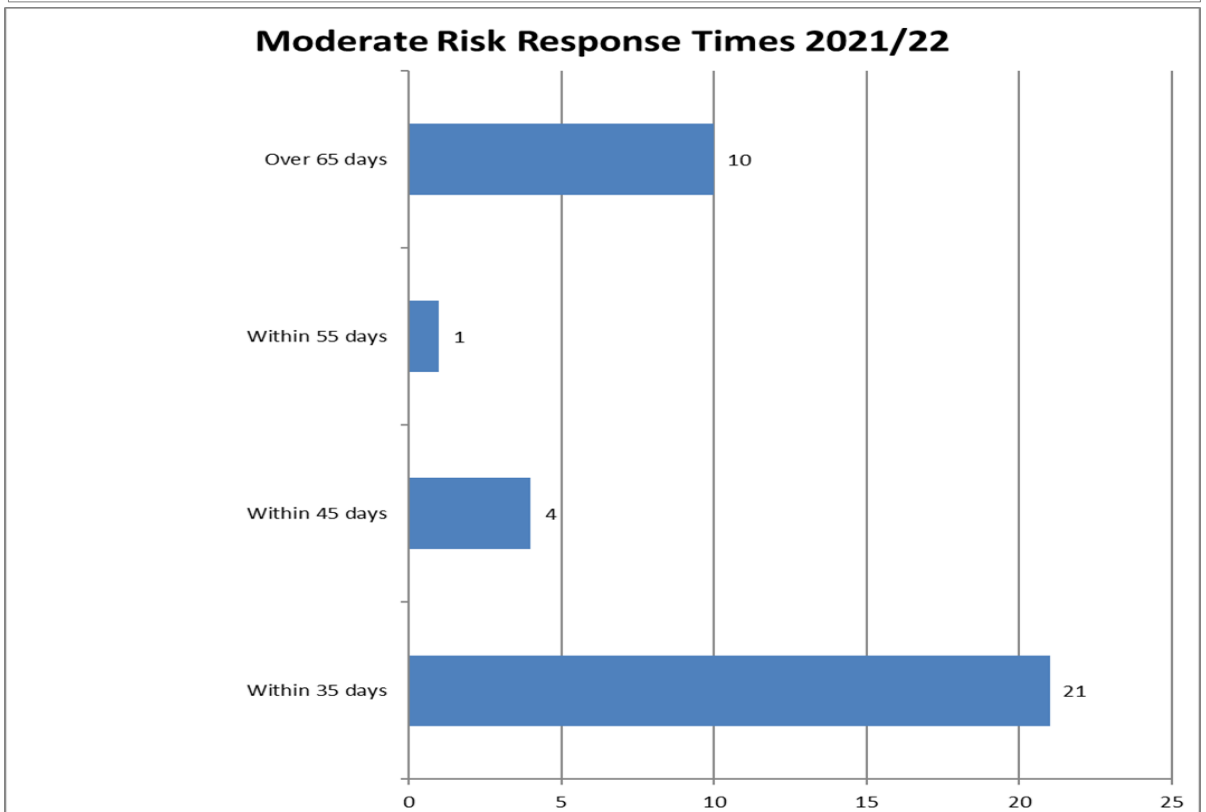
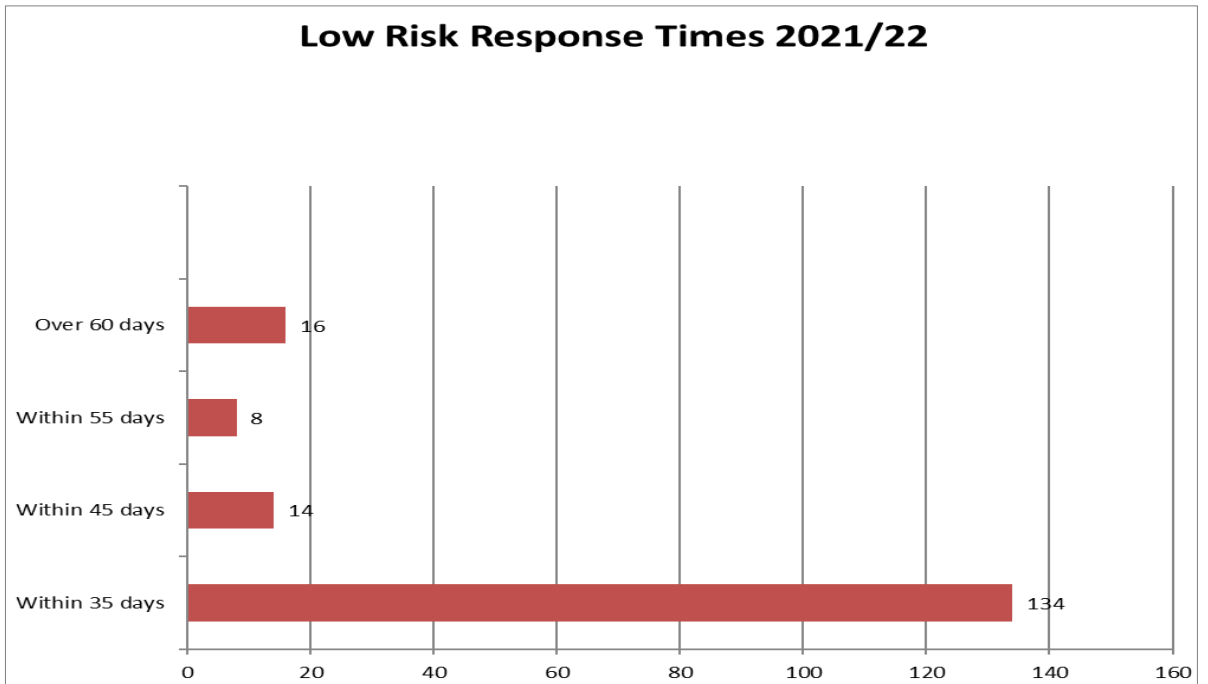
24. Outcomes of Formal Complaints: Low Risk complaints are relatively straight forward and relate to a single or a few issues that can be readily resolved. Some complaints were redirected, such as to other partner organisations or to the provider's own complaints process.

<b>Low Risk Complaints</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Upheld	21	26
Partially Upheld	22	30
Not Upheld	20	45
Re-directed	6	3
Discontinued (includes referred to Safeguarding)	37	62
Permission Required	1	-
Withdrawn	-	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>172</b>

25. Moderate Risk complaints are generally those that deal with a number of issues, or a number of teams and cross organisational issues. These are either dealt with by a relevant Social Care Manager or Advanced Social Work Practitioner or the Investigating Officer for Adult Social Care.

<b>Moderate Risk Complaints</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Upheld	4	3
Partially Upheld	8	8
Not Upheld	2	4
Discontinued	4	17
Redirected	1	2
Withdrawn	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>

26. Timescales: There are no prescribed time limits for dealing with complaints, although the legislation suggests a maximum of 6 months. The expectation is that reasonable timescales are negotiated and agreed with the complainant. Adult Social Care have set default time limits of 35 working days for the completion of complaints, although it is possible that such timescales are extended for more complex complaints.



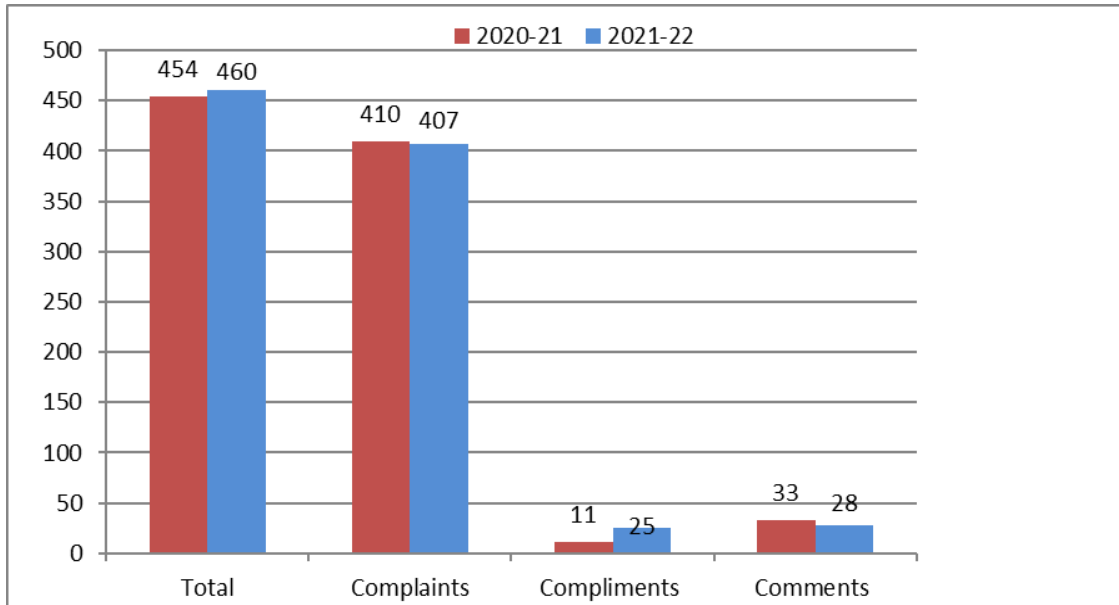
## 27. Compliments

Compliments	2020/21	2021/22
Central Services	15	10
Commissioning	-	1
Mental Health & Learning Disabilities	11	39
Operations & Intergration	133	68
Provider Services	93	92
Quality, Safeguarding, DOLS & Prisons	1	3

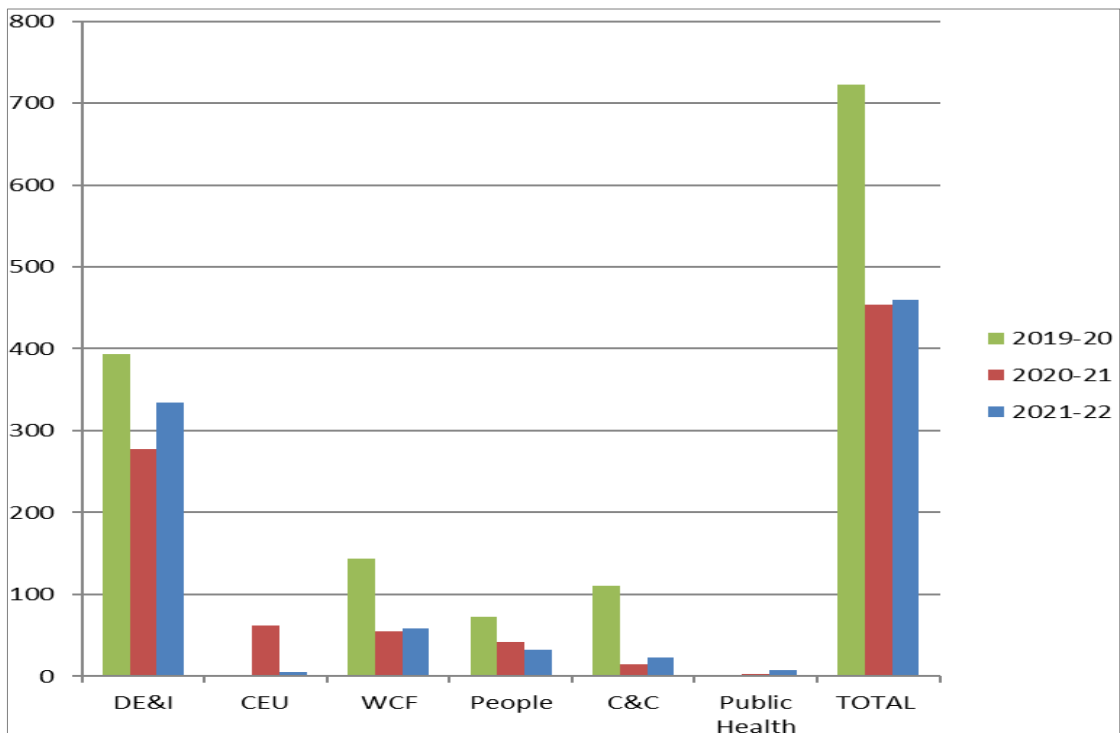
Urgent Care	14	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>222</b>

### Corporate Complaints

28. Number of Complaints: The total number of representations received in 2021-22 shows a minor increase of just over 1% compared with the previous year.

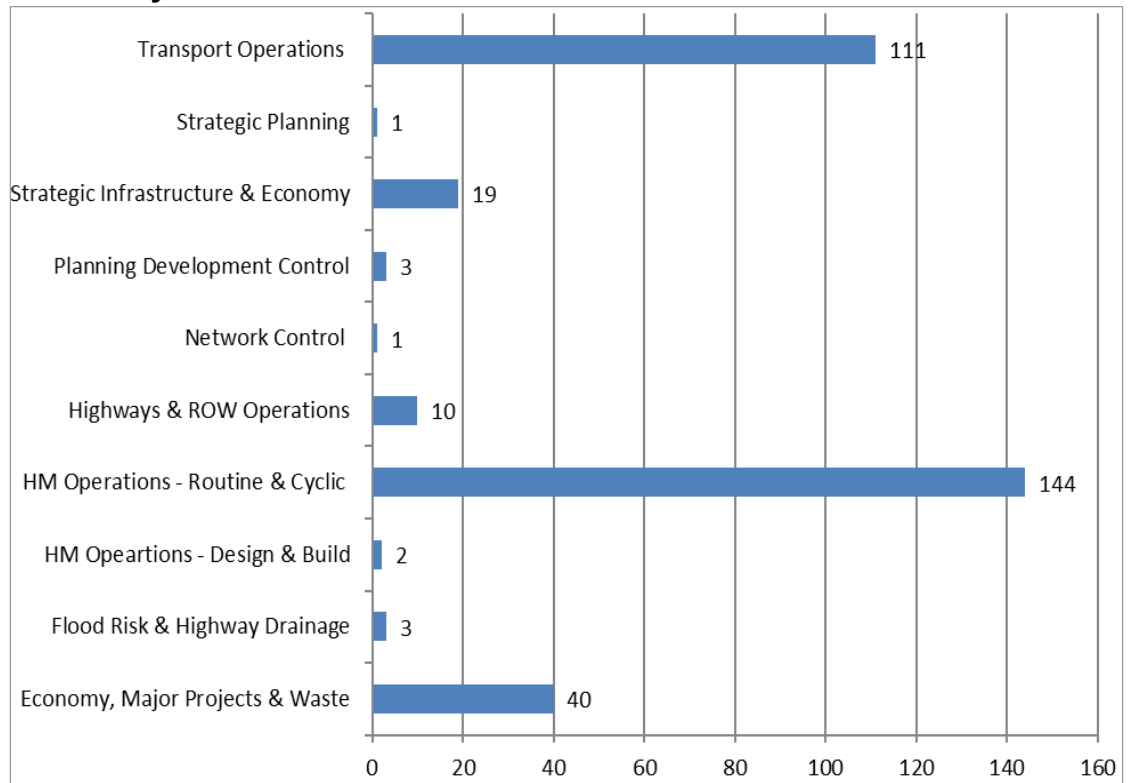


### 29. Complaints by Directorate

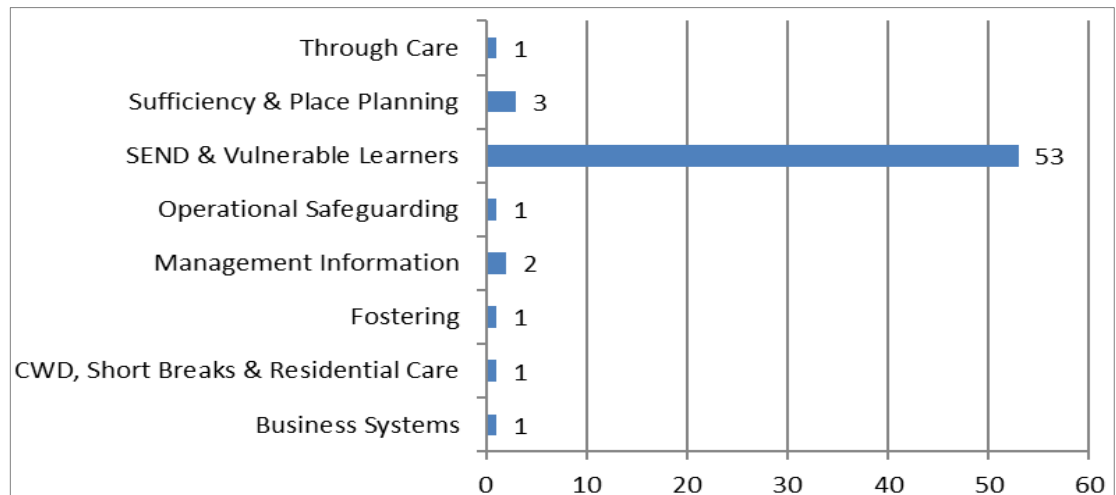


### 30. Complaints by Service Area

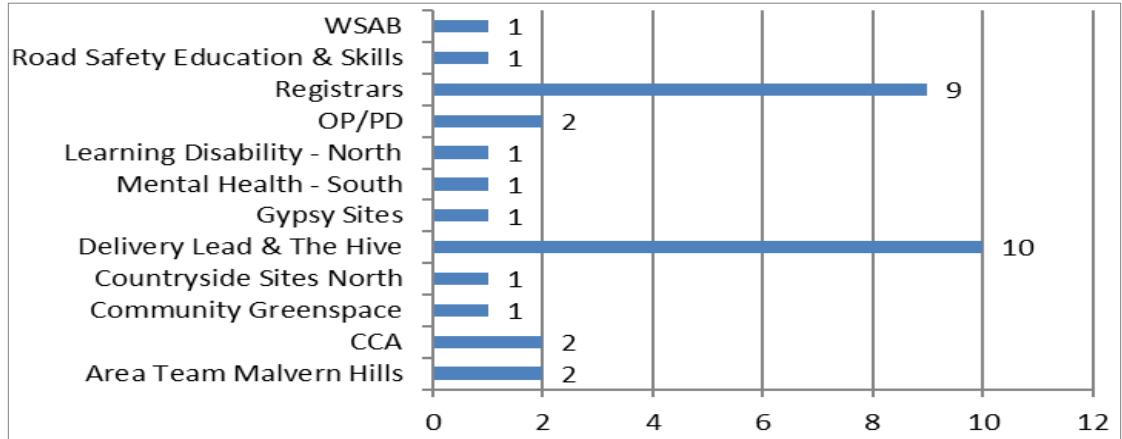
#### Economy and Infrastructure



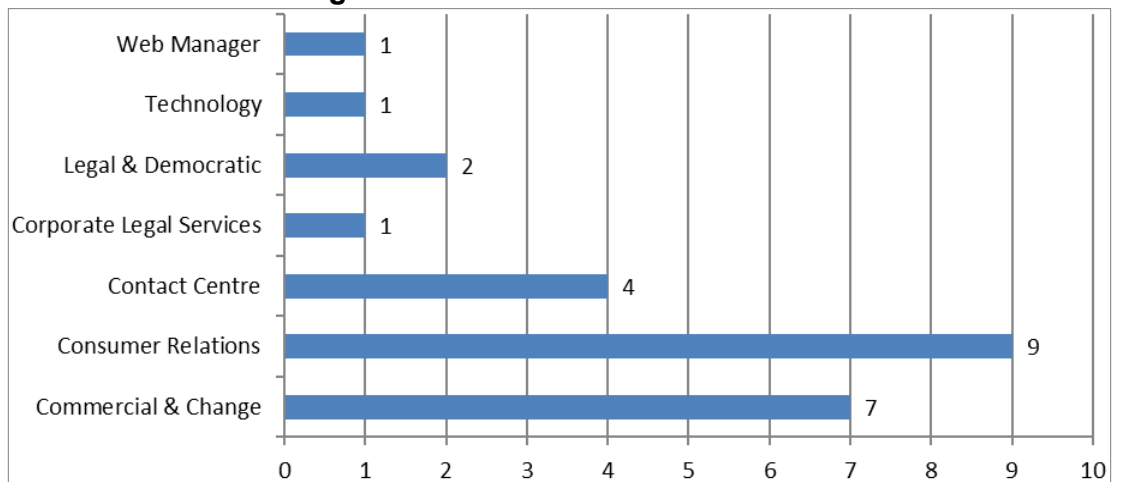
#### Worcestershire Children First



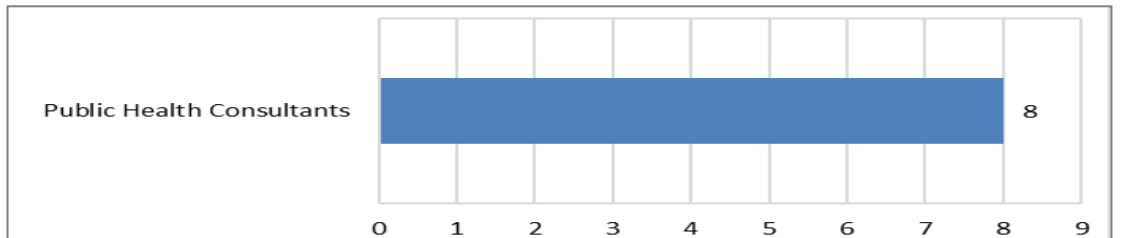
### People



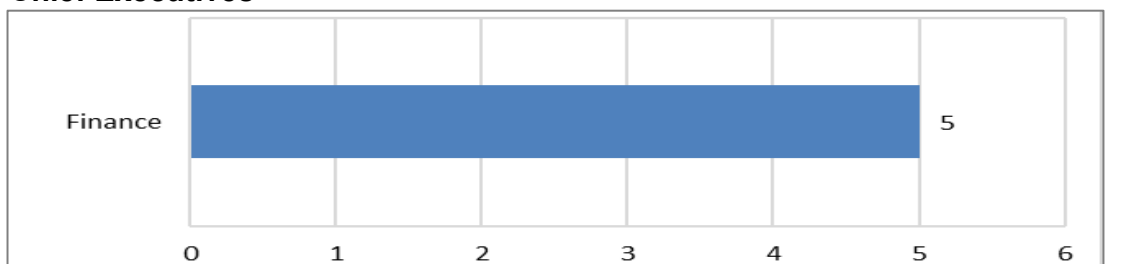
### Commercial and Change



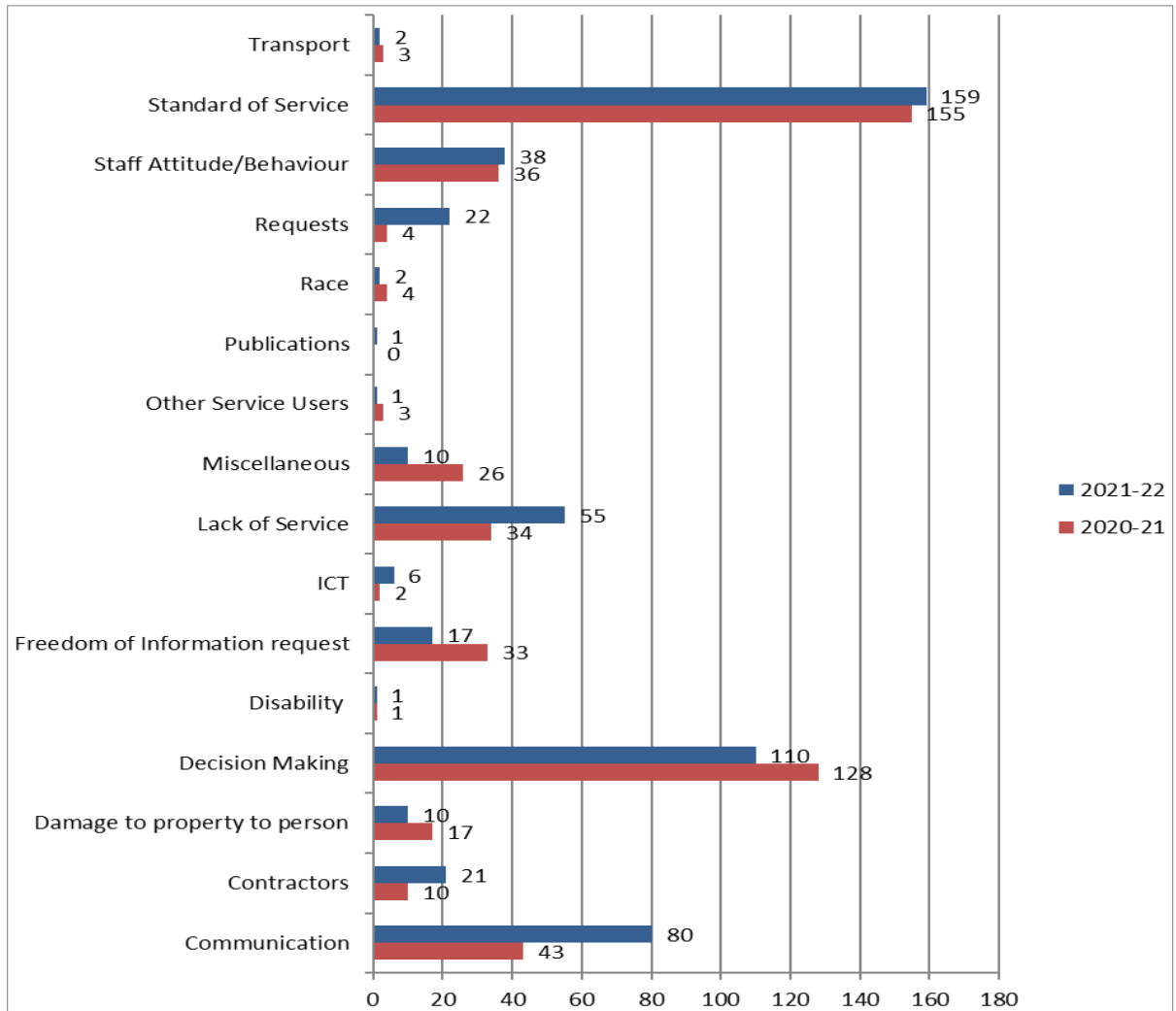
### Public Health



### Chief Executives



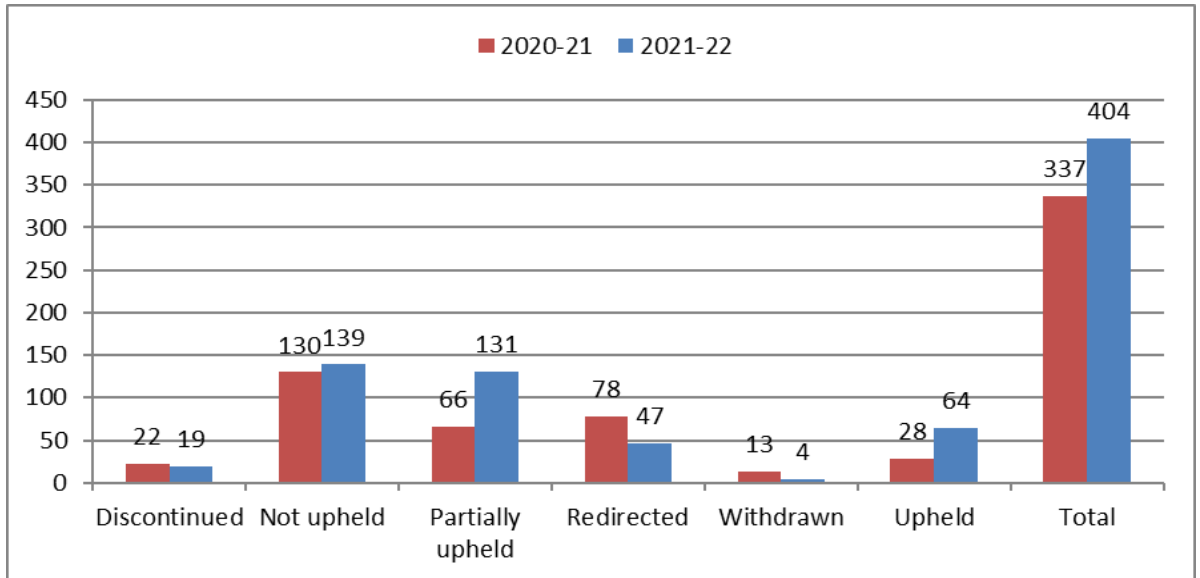
## 31. Nature of Complaints



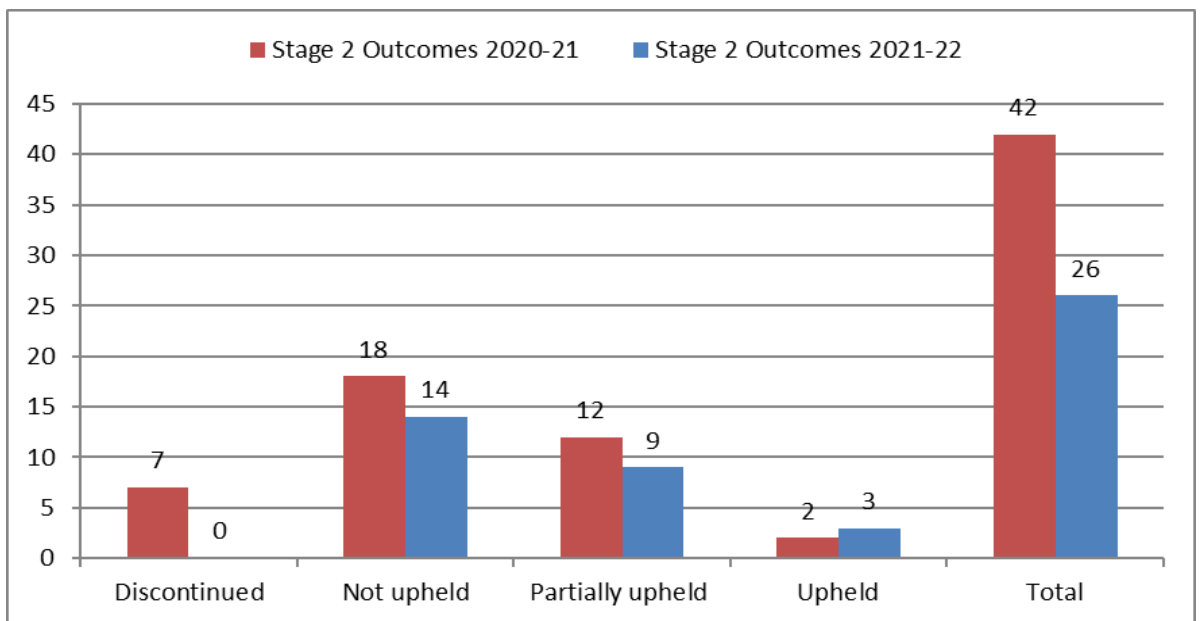
31. As in previous years, many of the complaints fall under the more general headings of Communication, Decision making and Standard of Service. The most noticeable change is the increase in the number of complaints relating to communication.

32. Stage 1 Outcomes: In the year 2021-22 there were a total of 404 Stage 1 complaints determined compared to 337 in 2020-21.

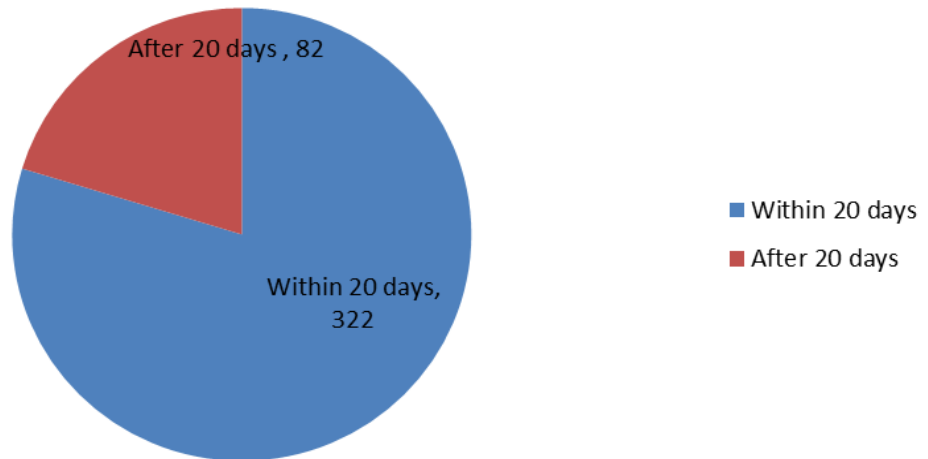




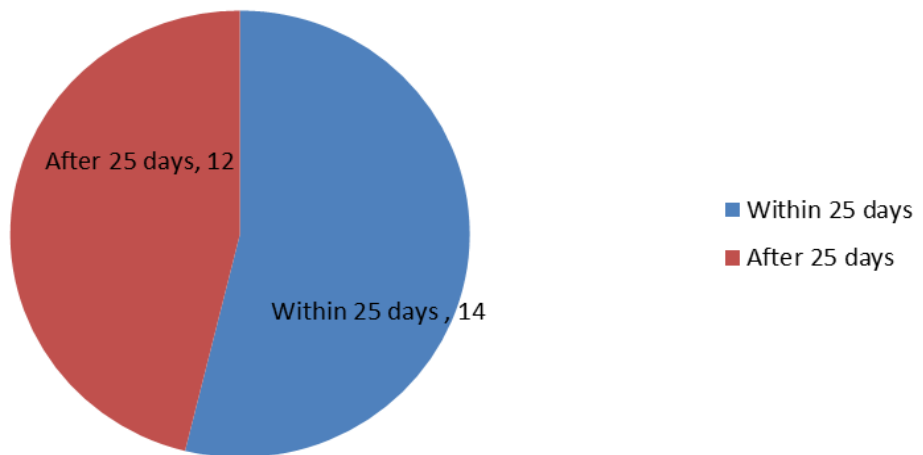
33. Stage 2 Outcomes: In the year 2021-22 there were a total of 26 Stage 2 complaints determined compared to 42 in 2020-21.



34. Timescales: Stage 1 Complaints: The majority, (80%) of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 20-day target. The average response time for all Stage 1 responses was 15 days. This is slightly lower than average from 2020-21 when the average was 13 days.



35. Stage 2 Complaints: 54% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to inside the 25-working day target. The average response time for all Stage 2 responses was 59 days.



### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

36. Stage 2 Outcomes: These figures are for all Stage 2 complaints completed during this reporting year. Some may have been received in the previous year and some investigations were on-going at the end of the year.

37. 2021/2022 Performance shows improvement on the previous year for the following areas:

- Children’s Social Care Stage 1 complaints completed in 20 days has improved from 72.37%
- Children’s Social Care Stage 2 complaints completed in 65 days has improved from 30.12%
- Corporate Stage 2 complaints completed in 25 days has improved from 46.21%
- E&I Stage 2 complaints completed in 25 days has improved from 52%
- Children’s Social Care complaints progressing to Stage 2 has improved from 19.75%

<b>KPI*</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>2021 / 22 Performance</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Children's Social Care Stage 1 complaints completed in timescale (within 20 days)</b>	90%	89.79%	Higher performance is better
<b>Children's Social Care Stage 2 complaints completed in 65 days</b>	90%	72.50%	Higher performance is better
<b>Adult Social Care complaints completed in timescale (within 6 months)</b>	100%	98.72%	Higher performance is better
<b>Corporate Stage 1 complaints completed in timescale (within 20 days)</b>	90%	73.13%	Higher performance is better
<b>Corporate Stage 2 complaints completed in timescale (within 25 days)</b>	90%	83.33%	Higher performance is better
<b>E&amp;I Stage 1 complaints completed in timescale (within 20 days)</b>	90%	78.9%	Higher performance is better
<b>E&amp;I Stage 2 complaints completed in timescale (within 25 days)</b>	90%	83.33%	Higher performance is better
<b>Adult Social Care complaints that progress to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</b>	25%	4.45%	Lower performance is better
<b>Corporate complaints that progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2</b>	25%	18.10%	Lower performance is better
<b>Children's Social Care complaints that progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2</b>	25%	6.40%	Lower performance is better

(NB some of these are new indicators and therefore comparison with the previous year is not possible).

## **Learning from Complaints**

38. When a complaint is upheld (Council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a change to policy or service delivery, the Consumer Relations Unit produce an action plan report and follow up with the service any learning/action that needs to be carried out. Recommendations within these reports are agreed with appropriate Assistant Director and shared with the relevant Director.

39. Learning from complaints is an important aspect of the Complaints procedure. Examples from 2021/22 include:

- i. Staff to be mindful that whilst we are generally clear that clients have a right to be consulted about their care arrangements and their views considered, wider family and care networks may not be aware of this responsibility and

will sometimes assume that concerns raised ought to be kept confidential. Perhaps a discussion with the family to advise that those concerns needed to be shared with him might have averted the arguments and stresses that ensued.

- ii. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Form 3 has been amended to reflect accurate information and a copy resent. The learning from this complaint investigation has been shared with the DoLS team and assessors have been asked to double check the accuracy of dates and information on the form.
- iii. A review of care needs should always take place before a conclusion is made regarding long term support. As a result, the following action will be taken:
  - The manager of the service will discuss the discharge home to assess model with all assessors.
  - The manager of the service will raise this complaint as a concern with the hospital team.
- iv. The development of a criterion for remedies of complaints about Worcestershire Children First (WCF) to ensure a consistent approach; this may include the development of practice standards/procedures or training etc.

## **Complaint Training**

40. Consumer Relations Officers provide training sessions for staff on the operation of the 3 different complaints procedures, as and when required. So far in the current year 4 sessions have been provided for staff in People Directorate (14 attendees). This is in addition to the guidance available on the staff intranet.

## **Vexatious Complainant Procedure**

41. There are procedures for dealing with vexatious complainants and they are set out in the legislation for the Adult and Children's representations procedures. As a Local Authority we have also adopted a similar procedure for Corporate Complaints. It is a serious measure to take, and the criteria must be evidenced and met to instigate it. The team manage this process, in conjunction with senior managers of the affected service. However, identifying someone as vexatious does not mean that we can refuse to take new complaints from them or to communicate with them on some level. The team give advice to managers on how to handle difficult or persistent complainants before reaching the question of using the vexatious process. So far this year, no complainant has been registered as vexatious.

## **Compliments**

42. The Senior Leadership Team considered a report on complaints recently and determined to undertake greater promotion of compliments where possible. Although there are existing processes for recording, acknowledging, and sharing compliments within a service, Directors will personally receive copies of all compliments for their service and undertake to ensure they are fully promoted and drawn to the attention of the relevant Cabinet Member.

## **Monitoring Information**

43. The Council does not currently collect any demographic information to support data analysis or capture evidence of any groups being disproportionately affected. The Council, being under the Public-Sector Equality Duty must, on an on-going basis, consider how its policies are working for the diverse communities the Council serves.

## **Independent Investigators and Independent Persons**

44. The Children's Act 1989, subsequent legislation and guidance determine the Children's Social Care procedure in place in the Council. At Stage 1, WCF staff carry out the investigation and respond to the complainant direct, as the requirement is to deal with matters as close to the point of service delivery as possible. They have 10 working days to do so, extendable to 20 working days if necessary.

45. At Stage 2, the appointment of an Independent Person (IP) is required, together with an Investigating Officer (IO). Whilst an IO can be an employee of the authority, they cannot be from the service complained about. In the past, the Consumer Relations Officer for Children's Services did conduct some investigations themselves, whilst also using IOs from the pool, but workloads are now such that they are rarely able to do so, particularly given the tight timescale of 25 - 65 working days. Most local authorities use external IOs.

46. The roles of the IO and IP are set out in the guidance. The IO must be impartial and open-minded, and their investigation based on an analysis of information and interviews. Their conclusions must be evidenced and reasonable based on the balance of probability. An IP is involved at all stages of the investigation and cannot be an elected member, employee, or former employee (or spouse). Their role is to ensure the investigation is open, transparent and fair (particularly regarding the young person concerned). If the complaint progresses to Stage 3 both the IO and IP are required to attend the Review Panel and speak to their reports.

47. IOs are also used for Moderate and High Risk Adult Social Care complaints and Stage 2 Corporate complaints where the Consumer Relations Officers are unable to undertake the investigations themselves.

## **Legal Implications**

48. Stage 2 Outcomes: These figures are for all Stage 2 complaints completed during this reporting year. Some may have been received in the previous year and some investigations were on-going at the end of the year.

49. Children and Family Services - The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Local Authority functions covered include services provided under Parts III, IV and V of the Children Act 1989.

50. Adult Social Care – The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, which came into force on 1 April 2009.

51. Public Health - The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

## **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

52. The complaints element of the social care and corporate procedure is part of a wider assurance process supporting quality in service delivery standards. This can then be a positive experience for customers and contribute to their health and well-being. For those occasions where the experience which has led to a complaint is a less positive one, then there is an opportunity for appropriate action or redress so that the health and well-being of the complainant and/or relevant others is secured. The compliments process allows customers to note great practice by the Council; positive experience of officers working in many different settings will support improved experience of health and well-being for individuals as well as for staff who can be satisfied that their work is appreciated.

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

53. The Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Consider the information provided in the report.
- Determine any comments the Panel would wish to make to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services and Communication.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - Annual Review letter for Worcestershire County Council 2022.

Appendix 2 – Examples of compliments received during 2021/2022

## **Contact Points**

Deborah Dale, Member Engagement Officer

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the Proper Officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes of the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 November, 20 July and 11 March 2021.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

20 July 2022

*By email*

Mr Robinson  
Head of Paid Service  
Worcestershire County Council

Dear Mr Robinson

### **Annual Review letter 2022**

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2022. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

### **Complaint statistics**

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 27 July 2022. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your

Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

### **Your organisation's performance**

Once again, I find myself raising concerns with how your Council responds to my investigators' requests for information. We have seen cases where your Council takes too long to respond to us or where the responses do not address the enquiries we have made. There were similar delays in implementing agreed recommendations. This happened in a quarter of the cases where we found fault, and recommended actions your Council should take. This is a pattern we have seen for four consecutive years. These issues undermine the public's confidence in using a complaints system. I would ask that you improve communication with my staff and tell them what steps you will take to ensure that these are not matters I will be commenting on in future.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

I know your organisation, like ours, will have been through a period of adaptation as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic lifted. While some pre-pandemic practices returned, many new ways of working are here to stay. It is my continued view that complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic. Through the lens of this recent upheaval and adjustment, I urge you to consider how your organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility. Properly resourced complaint functions that are well-connected and valued by service areas, management teams and elected members are capable of providing valuable insight about an organisation's performance, detecting early warning signs of problems and offering opportunities to improve service delivery.

I want to support your organisation to harness the value of complaints and we continue to develop our programme of support. Significantly, we are working in partnership with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code. We are aiming to consolidate our approaches and therefore simplify guidance to enable organisations to provide an effective, quality response to each and every complaint. We will keep you informed as this work develops, and expect that, once launched, we will assess your compliance with the code during our investigations and report your performance via this letter.

An already established tool we have for supporting improvements in local complaint handling is our successful training programme. We adapted our courses during the Covid-19 pandemic to an online format and successfully delivered 122 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,600 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

Yours sincerely,



Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England



### Complaints upheld



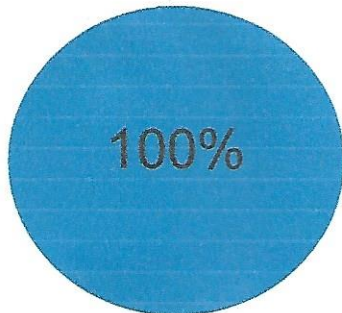
63% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of 71% in similar organisations.

12  
upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of 19 investigations for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



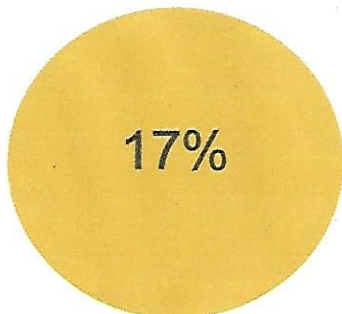
In 100% of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of 100% in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of 12 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

### Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In 17% of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of 8% in similar organisations.

2  
satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of 12 upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

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## 0Appendix 2: Examples of compliments received during 2021/2022

### Children Social Care Compliments

- i. Feedback from a young person about their social worker:  
*■■■■ is the best social worker ever, she is part of my family and who is most important to me."*
- ii. Feedback about an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):  
*"You have always been ultra efficient and have always put the children first. We have been very fortunate to have had you as our IRO"*
- iii. Feedback from an Independent Advocate about a social worker:  
*■■■■ "Yes I've done this job for 15 years and she is a pleasure to work with and has come out of assessments with her saying how relieved and calm she felt as she makes her feel at ease which is brilliant, she is a great social worker"*
- iv. Feedback from a parent about a social worker:  
*"Honestly she is absolutely incredible; she has helped her so much. I'm glad we are still working with her, she is the best social worker we have had - she took things at my children pace and did not force anything. She saw things as a whole."*

### Adult Social Care Compliments

- i. From a service user about a Social Worker:  
*"I have to acknowledge the allocated SW's commitment and engagement with the process, providing information and responding to requests for action. This has really supported the complex abuse investigation.*
- ii. From a relative of a service user about a Social Worker:  
*"Thank you for all you have done for Mum and Dad in the time you have been their social worker. I have found you to be fantastically supportive, reactive, and effective in all our dealings. Everything would have been so much harder without your involvement."*
- iii. From a service user about a Social Worker:  
*"Thank you for everything you have managed to get done. You have been exceptional in your kindness. It has been much appreciated."*
- iv. From a relative of a service user about a Social Worker:  
*"From the minute you became Mom's caseworker you went over and above to make sure everything was done in a timely manner. Nothing was too much trouble, you never made me feel as if I was a nuisance. You explained everything and put me at ease. Your actions mean more than I or my family can say, thank you."*
- v. From a service user about a Social Worker:  
*"Thank you' for everything you did. At a really difficult time you showed real compassion and I felt you were doing everything you could to turn a horrid*

*situation into a really positive one. The time you turned it all around was incredible and the relief we both felt can't really be explained. I know the restraints you are all under and that's why it is so important to tell you what a great job you did for us. You never rushed me and listened, that goes a long way these days. Thank you so much again and even when you are having a rubbish day just know you are fab at what you do."* (by e-mail).

vi. From a relative of a service user about a Social Worker:

*"Thanks for listening and supporting me as a daughter regarding her mom in a care home and the DOLS assessment. It was so lovely to speak to you and so insightful in so many ways! I really appreciate you taking so much time to listen at what has been and continues to be a very stressful time for me."* (by email)

vii. From a relative of a service user about a Social Worker:

*"I just wanted to thank you for dealing with us in a sensitive way during the illness and keeping us very well-informed about his care situation."*

## **Corporate Compliments**

- i. *Will you please pass on my thanks to the Concessionary bus pass team. I spoke to them this morning regarding the renewal of my bus pass. They were very helpful and patient. (April 2021)*
- ii. *Removal of graffiti on the Simon de Montfort bridge, Evesham. A resident called to say thank you very much for removing this. (May 2021)*
- iii. *THANK YOU! Please compliment the staff at Warndon Library; they are always helpful and courteous. (June 2021)*
- iv. *I wanted to extend my best wishes and my thanks for all the work we have done together over this year. It has been an exciting (and often trying) time but I really think Kingfisher and WCF are working together to support Worcestershire children and working with you has enabled that to happen. I would like you to extend my thanks to all your team who have worked so tirelessly on referrals and on moving quickly to make post 16 happen. (July 2021)*
- v. *I would like to make a compliment to all those at the Malvern Library, both employed and volunteers who have worked in the past two years at that location. During a most extraordinary time - the pandemic - they showed remarkable resilience, care and a positive attitude to 'getting the job done' and being accessible to customers. (September 2021)*
- vi. *I just wanted to say a massive THANK YOU for your positive communication and patience re all the documentation for (my Children's) EHCPs and my SEN questions. (October 2021)*
- vii. *Many thanks for sending me a copy of your outcome letter to \*\*\*\*, I am glad to be able to read it. Your letter exemplifies the great skill needed to reflect accurately all parts of a hearing, and the tact to phrase findings and recommendations in a manner likely to be as acceptable as possible to the complainant, particularly when complaints not upheld are confirmed by the Panel. (November 2021)*

## **CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

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#### **Summary**

1. From time to time the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

#### **Background**

2. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny. The 2022/23 Work Programme has been developed by taking into account issues still to be completed from 2021/22, the views of Overview and Scrutiny Members and other stakeholders and the findings of the budget scrutiny process.
3. Suggested issues have been prioritised using scrutiny feasibility criteria in order to ensure that topics are selected subjectively and the 'added value' of a review is considered right from the beginning.
4. The Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is responsible for scrutiny of:
  - Commissioning, contracts and commerce and ensuring the corporate commissioning cycle works well
  - Transformation
  - Finance
  - Localism and Communities
  - Organisation and employees
5. The overall scrutiny work programme was discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) on 29 June 2022 and was agreed by Council on 14 July 2022.

#### **Dates of Future 2022 Meetings**

- 1 November 2022 at 2pm

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

6. The Panel is asked to consider the 2022/23 Work Programme and agree whether it would like to make any amendments. The Panel will wish to retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2022/23

## **Contact Points**

Deborah Dale, Member Engagement Officer 01905 846282  
Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board 29 June 2022](#)

[Agenda for Council on 14 July 2022.](#)

## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

### Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
21 September 2022	Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q1 April – June 2022)	Quarterly	
	Performance monitoring of comments, compliments and complaints	8 November 2021 20 July 2021 11 March 2021	
	Gypsy/Traveller Services		Panel member suggestion March 2022
1 November 2022	Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q2 July – September 2022)	Quarterly	
	Update on the Procurement Strategy	14 February 2022 24 September 2021	
	Update on the Councils Strategy for Museums, Arts and Culture		
January 2023	Scrutiny of 2023/24 Budget		
March 2023	Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q3 October - December 2022)		
<b>Possible Future Items</b>			
TBC	The Future of Redditch Library		
TBC	'Have your Say' Public Roadshows		Suggested at Agenda Planning September 2022
TBC	Data Analytics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Power BI Strategy</li> <li>- Instant Atlas</li> <li>- Framework for publicly accessible data</li> </ul>	17 January 2022	

TBC	Update on the Council's Policy on Support for Refugees - to include details of the re-matching process.	23 May 2022	Agreed by Panel 23 May 2022
TBC	How the Council Supports Volunteers and Volunteering	24 September 2021 (Here2Help)	Chairman suggestion April 2022
TBC	Worcestershire One Public Estate		Agreed by Panel 14 February 2022
TBC	Electric Vehicle charging points on the County Council Estate		Agreed by Panel 14 February 2022
TBC	Performance of registration of deaths within 5 days	8 November 2021	Agreed by Panel 8 November 2021
TBC	Council Communication	8 November 2021	Agreed by Panel 8 November 2021
TBC	Countryside Parks and revenue opportunities		Agreed by OSPB 29 June 2022
TBC	Community Engagement (Here2Help)	24 September 2021	
TBC	West Mercia Energy Joint Committee Business Plan	17 January 2022	
<b>Standing Items</b>			
November/January	Budget Scrutiny		
	Annual update on the Council's energy purchasing arrangement via the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee including the Business Plan	17 January 2022	Agreed at October 2021 Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board
TBC	Councillors Divisional Funding Scheme	20 July 2021	
TBC	Worcestershire County Council Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy (RIPA)		



TBC	Performance monitoring of comments, compliments and complaints	8 November 2021 20 July 2021 11 March 2021	
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